

*Third Large Printing*

# Democracy Must Live!

The Collected Addresses of

**DORISE W. NIELSEN, M.P.**

“Democracy is a living thing. If you seek to bind and chain democracy, if you seek to keep it for a while without letting it live, and without permitting it to exercise itself, democracy will wither; it will die.”—Dorise W. Nielsen, M.P.



—By Karsch

A TRIBUNE PAMPHLET 10c

*First Printing—September 1, 1940*  
*Second Printing—November 1, 1940*  
*Third Printing—December 1, 1940*

Published by  
The Canadian Tribune Publishing Co.  
95 King St. East - Toronto, Canada



To the people of North Battleford, in gratitude,  
for electing to parliament a "champion  
of the people."

"We ain't gonna die out. People is goin' on—  
changin' a little maybe, but goin' right on. . . .  
We are the people. We will endure like the  
earth while the rich wither away from generation  
to generation." — Ma Joad, in the *Grapes of  
Wrath*.



¶ "The most subversive thing in Canada is poverty. I shall never forget that . . ."

# Champion of the People

## The Story of Dorise Nielsen, M.P.

By L. L. L. GOLDEN

(Reprinted by permission from  
*Saturday Night*)

**A** LONG-LEGGED, fourteen-year-old girl crouched in the doorway of her home. The back door of the small London house was open. Not a light burned in the black streets. Her mother clutched her arm tightly. Suddenly there was a flash of fire, then a roar. The mother cried, "Somebody's sons." Her grip melted. She had fainted.

Mrs. Dorise Winnifred Nielsen, Canada's only woman member of the House of Commons, had experienced her first air raid.

Mrs. Nielsen knew and understood the meaning of war long before she came to Canada. She knew and felt the horror of war as all those, no matter how young, did in England in the years '14 to '18. But she is no pacifist. She knows the struggle and fight for existence.

Since the Great War she has been carrying on her own war against poverty, hopelessness and lack of opportunity. To her, her election to the Canadian parlia-

ment is not the end of the campaign but the beginning.

Life has been a continuous struggle to the woman who was elected as a Unity candidate in Saskatchewan in the last federal election. To the former school teacher, Miss Webber, who was the victor over C. R. McIntosh, for 15 years Liberal member for North Battleford, the success was not her own but that of the drought-stricken farmers of her district who united in protest against their living conditions.

### Workman's Daughter

**DORISE WEBBER** was six years old when her father died. A working-man who had always voted Conservative, he and his wife enrolled their child as a member of the Primrose League in the certainty and expectation that their daughter would some day be an upholder of party tradition.

For 20 years after the death of her father, her mother still voted Conservative. The daughter was interested in politics in only an academic way.

The future Canadian M.P. had her schooling in the elementary school of her native London. Preparations to take her high-school work at Bruges, Belgium, were completed when war broke out and she continued her education in London.

Poor as her mother was she insisted on continued study and Dorise went on to Hockerill College in Bishops-Stratford. She graduated with honors in biology and art. With school teaching as her goal she went to St. Mary's Art Academy and then taught for three years in the elementary schools of London under the London County Council.

Miss Webber wanted a change. She wanted a new start. She had friends in British Columbia. The result was that in 1927 she came to Canada and went out to the west coast.

There she found that her English certificates would not allow her to teach in British Columbia. In Saskatchewan she was acceptable. Her first appointment came in Saskatoon, where she taught public school as a substitute.

For a long time the Fellowship of the Maple Leaf, a Church of England organization for the exchange of teachers, had been bringing English teachers out to Canada.

It was the fellowship that assisted Miss Webber in getting a permanent post—at Norbury. But she only lasted six months. In the

fall of '28 the tall, dark-haired light-blue-eyed school teacher was married to Peter Nielsen, farmer.

### Farm Wife's Life

NORBURY is typical of many western drought districts; Mr. Nielsen of many western homesteaders. He was born in Quebec, of Danish parentage. For four years he had served in the ranks of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. With the conclusion of his service he went out to Saskatchewan, got himself a piece of land, built a shack and set to work clearing and farming wheat on two quarter sections, about 320 acres.

Mrs. Nielsen knew nothing about farming. Definitely a city girl with her whole background far removed from the farm, she dug in with her husband to do her best as the wife of a western farmer.

Like Scandinavians generally, Mr. Nielsen was interested in co-operatives. He was a good supporter of the Wheat Pool; had belonged to the old Grain Growers. It was through him and through the conditions she had to see and live in that Mrs. Nielsen became interested in Saskatchewan farmers' movements.

There was good wheat farming for a while. Together they thought and dreamed of the future. The school teacher who didn't know which end of the cow to milk set about her work building a home in a place that can be called nothing but a shack

It can't even be called a log cabin.

Came the depression, with poor prices for the farmers. Came the horrible drought years. Her first child, Christine, came 11 years ago. They lived, slaved and hoped, and finally even hope began to dim.

She thought it was perhaps some fault of their own and that of their neighbors that they were unable to get the necessities of life that to drought farmers are now beginning to look like distant luxuries. She came to believe their plight was caused by general conditions.

The hopes for a decent house to live in, for some good farm equipment, for some mechanical aids in the house, for electric lights, for a telephone, for a few hours of leisure, for an opportunity to read, for a few cents to buy newspapers, money for clothers to replace torn and worn garments, all faltered.

### "Family of Five . . ."

**TWO MORE** children came,

Thelma, who is now eight years old and John, who is five and a half. Still the Nielsens subsisted and hoped.

The family became poorer and poorer. They were unable to keep up their mortgage payments. And as she herself says: "If it hadn't been for the Maple Leaf Fellowship sending parcels of clothing and the help of a sister in England I'd been forced to go about with a plaided straw skirt like a

South Sea Islander and a hat made of chicken feathers."

The final blow to the family came when they had to go on relief. Mrs. Nielsen is a courageous woman. As she told the House of Commons in her maiden speech, she was on relief for three years. "I feel myself very much qualified to speak upon this question of relief because for three years I have lived upon relief. I had to feed a family of five—listen carefully—upon \$11.25 per month."

And as she told the interviewer: "I know what it is to be a week or so at a time without the price of a postage stamp in the house."

It was impossible to buy books since there was no money. There was no recreation, nothing but hard work — churning butter, darning socks, looking after the children, keeping the family going.

When she could she would beg or borrow books from friends. The Wheat Pool Library was her only chance to get anything to read. It was the Nielsens' only change from drudgery. Neighbors used to make rugs out of rags.

And still there came no betterment.

With her reading, her background, her English belief in the right of the individual to live like a human being, she turned to the progressive movements. She ex-

pected nothing from the Liberal government, nor from a Conservative one.

### Joining the C.C.F.

**SLOWLY** she came to the conclusion that political action was her only hope. In 1930 she supported a Farmer-Labor candidate, Dr. Rose, who is a brother-in-law of J. S. Woodsworth. The Conservatives, believing she was still a Tory, gave her some gas for an old buggy and she brought out the Farmer-Labor vote. She became politically conscious in earnest.

Of course her candidate was defeated.

When the C.C.F. was formed she started to read their literature and became interested in their movement. That was her first step towards actively supporting Dr. Rose. It was also her first opportunity to make a speech from a political platform.

Mrs. Nielsen has ability. She went ahead in the C.C.F. She became vice-president of the Meadow Lake constituency organization period. She became organizer for women's clubs. She was elected to their provincial council. Then came the break.

Mrs. Nielsen was certain that the only way to protest effectively was to defeat the Liberal member. Conservatives, C.C.F.'ers, dissatisfied Liberals and Independents as well as Social Crediters would have to unite. She declared for a Unity platform.

Expulsion from the C.C.F. was

the next step. Today the C.C.F. party would like to claim her. But she still remembers what the people of North Battleford wanted and what they believed in. She remains a completely independent and free member.

The various dissident groups decided upon a convention to find what platform they could agree on.

### Move for Unity

**THE RESULT** was that at Medstead on July 18, '39, there was a convention to draw a platform and elect a candidate. The platform was drawn. Mrs. Nielsen was nominated at the convention. Two men stood against her. One belonged to the C.C.F., the other to the Social Credit Party. She really tried to withdraw but was persuaded to stand. Both men were defeated on the first ballot.

The Communists had supported the program drawn up at the convention. With the coming of the war they were unable to make the changes they desired in the platform and so withdrew their support from the Unity candidate. The campaign started to elect Mrs. Nielsen.

The situation to an outsider looked hopeless. There was no money. There was no publicity. There was no tight-knit organization. The sitting member was well entrenched. There was a general swing in favor of the government. The riding was the biggest in area of any in Canada. The winter was



coming upon them. It was almost impossible to reach the 25,000 constituents spread over an area which went through seven degrees of latitude, which was in parts 130 miles across and in which there were poor roads and access to many of the voters only through the use of airplanes.

And this candidate and her supporters could by no stretch of the imagination afford airplanes.

Add to all those problems a riding which is not only Liberal by tradition but which has a great number of French Canadians and Ukrainians who have long been supporters of the Liberal candidate. Then mix all that with the unhomogeneous groups of German Mennonites, German Catholics, Hungarians, Russians, Poles, as well as those of Anglo-Saxon descent.

And on top of it all the candidate was a woman.

Despite all that the Liberal candidate, when the election was called, became panicky.

### Resort to Political Trickery

THERE was a mortgage on the quarter section on which the Nielsen shack was standing. It was still in arrears. In Saskatchewan there is legislation to prevent people from being evicted if the land on which their home stands becomes possessible by the mortgagee.

One snowy night Mr. Nielsen was away. Mrs. Nielsen was home alone with her children. At nine

o'clock a snow plane arrived. Out stepped a Liberal lawyer of the nearby district. He rapped on the Nielsen door and was admitted. Then he showed what purported to be a court order for immediate eviction. It was cold and snowing outside. The family had no place to go.

Knowing something of political affairs by this time, Mrs. Nielsen was not unduly surprised. She refused to leave her shack. She knew she was protected by legislation. She was certain, as she said many times in the campaign, that it was a case of "political trickery."

The whole question was aired in the Saskatchewan legislature. Mrs. Nielsen was not evicted. Her attempted eviction brought her and her candidature closer to the district. The story made its rounds throughout the riding. She was admired for her pluck in refusing to be intimidated. The attempt to frighten the candidate, to break her down, to drive her out, had failed.

The campaign Mrs. Nielsen carried on was amazing. To pay the necessary and absolutely essential expenses, collection plates were passed around at meetings. Nickels and dimes were the usual contributions. Once in a long while a dollar bill was contributed and it looked, according to the candidate, "mighty big."

Conservatives, disappointed Liberals, Social Crediters, members of the C.C.F. supported her on

the platform. But above all it was a campaign of the dispossessed themselves as a protest to the rest of Canada.

People who had never voted anything but Liberal supported her. For the first time in the riding's history the French Canadians voted against the Liberal Party.

### Courage, Not Money

**THE COST?** The total was \$741.68 and that includes everything. Cheap when stacked up against \$30,000 spent by one candidate in an eastern Canada riding.

Today Mrs. Nielsen is getting used to living in a city again. The nearest town to her farm is Spiritwood, eight and a half miles away.

She has her three children with her in Ottawa. She can now window shop. Her husband is farming the land.

After her maiden speech notes of congratulations flooded her office in the House of Commons. They came from all parts of the House. Many of the members dropped around themselves. They were all struck by the moral cour-

age of a woman who quietly told the House of the suffering of her neighbors and herself in order to get something done.

But Ottawa is not changing Mrs. Nielsen. She is level-headed, pleasant, speaks in a pleasing, soft voice. Her hardships have not made her bitter. She has poise that hard work on the farm has not ruined.

Tall (five feet ten inches), slim (140 pounds), young (38 years old), Mrs. Nielsen is a good member who knows and understands why she was sent to Ottawa.

Here is her function at Ottawa: "First it is to bring to the attention of the public that people are living in the conditions I have described in this Canada of ours. Then it is to point out that a chain being as strong as its weakest link, a nation as strong as its humblest people, conditions must, simply must, be improved. As long as people are living in poverty Canada is not a great nation. Actually the most subversive thing in Canada is poverty. I shall never forget why I was sent here and whom I represent."

---

---

---

¶ "I must raise my voice in defence of and for the protection of life, the life of the Canadian people . . ."

# The People Must Live

Mrs. Nielsen's Maiden Speech in the House of Commons

May 20, 1940

**M**R. SPEAKER, in rising for the first time to speak in this House I wish to express my regrets that the Rev. W. G. Brown is not sitting here beside me this evening, because, having known him, I feel sure that his voice would have been raised throughout this session in the interests of the people of Canada.

I find myself in the unique position of being the only woman member of this House, and I deeply regret it. It is a sad reflection upon us as a nation when, while over fifty per cent of our voters are women, we can have only one representative of our sex in this House.

All through the ages we women unfortunately have been regarded more or less as the property of men. Because of that position we have been expected to be but the shadows of men, to reflect their ideas and to echo their sentiments. It is only within the last few years that we have become persons in our own rights. And we have at last the courage to search our own hearts and to find there that we have ideas and ideals peculiar to ourselves. To

fail to give expression to these ideas is to deny our womanhood.

## "The Great Question"

**T**ODAY the one great question of war overshadows everything else; until now it has received more attention in this House than anything else. From a woman's point of view I should like to say this, that war does not always mean the same things to women as it does to men. To me war means broken homes, widowhood, fatherless children, destruction, agony and death.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, what have women to do with death? Our purpose in the world is to give life and to protect it. At this time, particularly in this crisis, I feel that the women of this nation must keep a sane and level outlook, and they must remember that in a time of crisis their great duty is to guard and to protect life.

Through these last years two great calamities have reduced the people of the west, some of whom I have the honor to represent in this House, to the point of destitution. The economic depression and drought have brought to our people of the west insecurity, fear

of the future, heartbreak and hopelessness.

### "Farmers of the West"

POSSIBLY it has often been said in this House that the west has not received from this government the attention and the consideration that it should have received. I wish to stress that most emphatically. The farmers, if they had received the consideration of this government in past years, if they had received a just and fair price for their products, would have been only too willing to struggle on to be self-supporting.

The farmers of the west are wonderful people; they have virility and vitality in the highest degree, yet today you find them despondent and hopeless, fearing to look into the future, because they dread the years ahead. This government, having in the past failed to give our farmers a price which would enable them to be self-supporting, and failed to find employment for our youth, threw out relief as a sop to desperate people.

### Relief Demoralizing

I AM not an advocate of relief; there has never been anything more demoralizing to our people in the west than relief, there has never been anything more calculated to destroy their morale, take away their self-respect and sap their energy than this relief. Yet today and in the months ahead, if the basic problem of agriculture

is not tackled by this House so that these farmers of the west can be once again self-supporting, the relief must be continued and it must be increased if the people of the west are to survive.

I feel myself very much qualified to speak upon this question of relief, because for three years I have lived upon relief. I had to feed a family of five—listen carefully—upon \$11.25 a month.

AN HON. MEMBER: A dirty shame!

MRS. NIELSEN: And I have often wished I had the wisdom and the ability of the minister of finance (Mr. Ralston) to help me balance my budget. Indeed, it is a task. If this government in the days ahead cuts down the standard of living of the people in the west by reducing their relief, it condemns them to slow and agonizing death, both physical and mental.

It has been already agreed by those who are best qualified to study these problems that even before the coming of drought and depression the farmers of the west were not having a square deal or getting a decent living. Professor Britnell of Saskatchewan University has stated in one of his books that the people of the west have through these last years suffered unduly. I should like to quote from his book as follows:

*"Direct relief became necessary if starvation was to be averted, though the standard was often actually lower for the very large*



marginal group that managed to avoid relief, or for those who were just to be pushed on to relief, than for the actual relief recipients, though relief schedules have not been extravagant."

Indeed I, who have had to live upon relief, know that they were in no way extravagant. I would say to you, my friends—and I call you my friends because I cannot believe that hon. members on the government benches are men of stone; you are men of flesh and blood; you are made of the same texture as these people who are struggling in the west to earn for themselves a livelihood, to provide a home for their children; you are made of the same stuff as they—I cannot believe that you have not in your hearts that human compassion for your fellow men in times of such distress.

### "Another Hunger"

THERE is another kind of hunger. Robert Service, the poet of the north, calls it "hunger which is not of the belly kind." I speak of that need which the people of the west have for culture which is their natural right as citizens of this great country. They are living today under conditions which make it impossible for them to avail themselves of those things which they should have. Again I quote from Professor Britnell. He said:

*"There's no music, no books, no contact with the cultured, leisured world. One can't even window-*

*shop. Dirty, tawdry little village stores—and even they are miles away. There is only an aching, bewildered body whose strength wanes and waxes and wanes again. Above all, beyond all, there is the loneliness. It is an everpresent, all-pervading thing that both agonizes and numbs the soul. Or have farm women souls? Gorgeous sunrises flare and flame, painting the eastern sky with their glow, reflected in the west. We glance at it numbly as we stumble out. It means the beginning of—another day."*

I will not tell you any more about these things. Possibly you have heard them expressed many, many times. This is not hunger for food, but hunger of the mind.

I wish I could take you to our little schools. In the children of the west we may have girls and boys with the fingers of surgeons or the minds of scientists, who, if they were trained, might give of their knowledge to the benefit of the whole world, and who might help make the name of Canada famous among the nations of the world.

Today, however, if their mothers and fathers are unable to buy their textbooks and send them to high schools, those girls and boys go to work scrubbing floors and picking stones in the fields. Frustration is everywhere.

### Must Guard Youth

I WANT to bring these things to you, my friends, and once again advisedly I call you my

friends because you cannot be insensible; you cannot be unaware of the need for us as a nation to guard our youth and all the virility that is theirs. There is also another matter in the west which affects us as a nation.

Owing to lower standards of living during these last few years another problem is coming to the front: that is, the question of the health of our people. In the west we have isolated districts in some of which the people may have to go 20 or 30 miles to get a doctor.

In my travels through that north country I have come upon instances which may appear to you almost unbelievable. I have known cases where a father or mother, with a desperately sick child at home, has had to travel 20 miles or more in sub-zero weather, not to fetch a doctor but like a whipped dog to beg of a relief officer in an endeavor to obtain a permit to get a doctor to look after that child.

These things are a reflection upon us as a nation. I have said many times that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and as a nation we are only as great and as fine as the most humble of our people. When some of our people are living under such conditions as I have mentioned, then we definitely are not a great nation.

Since I have been in this city I have admired the great memorial to the soldiers who gave their lives in the last war. From an artistic point of view it is a won-

derful monument, which has impressed me greatly. It is a monument of stone, a monument to commemorate death and the dead.

In Saskatchewan we have living monuments to the last war. There I have seen returned men who, like driftwood cast up after the whirlwind and the whirlpool of the last war subsided, are now left on those desolate homesteads, uncared for and unnoticed. Since I have been in this city I have thought that I should like to bring some of those men here, in all their rags and tatters, and stand them around your great monument, to form a living testimony to the ingratitude of Canada.

### People Suspicious

THIS is undoubtedly a time of great crisis. Already the people of the west have realized that during this period they are going to be asked to make sacrifices, and they are beginning to ask themselves how they, who are so near the edge of destitution, can make yet another sacrifice.

In their minds they are beginning to doubt many things; suspicions are beginning to arise. They believe, and I think rightly, that the last government failed to give them economic freedom; today they are beginning to realize that they no longer have civil liberties or freedom, and, as I say, this is raising great doubt in their minds.

We have been told that the Defence of Canada Regulations are to be enforced to defend the

Canadian people from subversive elements. The people of the west are beginning to realize that there is one subversive element in Canada for which those regulations do not provide. They know it to be the greatest of all subversive influences. It is poverty, and it has been at work among them for many years. Realizing these things the people of the west are beginning to question many things in their own minds.

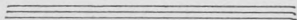
In times of crisis, Mr. Speaker, as at all times, life must go on. Life is greater than death; it prevails and goes on into the future. Every day children are born. Every day people must eat. Every spring the seed must be sown, and every fall the harvest must be gathered in.

In a time of crisis such as this we are sometimes prone to forget

that life continues and must continue, else there is nothing in the future toward which we may look. I would say most emphatically that the time to consider the life of the people of Canada is not when the war is finished but now.

Life must be protected now in this country. Although death stalks throughout the world and knocks at the door of every nation, life goes on.

In this time of crisis I feel that as a woman, and particularly as the only woman in this House, even though mine is the only voice raised—and I sincerely hope it will not be—yet I must raise it in defence of and for the protection of life, the life of the Canadian people, because the people of Canada must have life and they must have it more abundantly.



¶ "To many people in Canada the domestic crisis is one that looms as important in their minds as the war crisis . . ."

# Millions for War . . .

## Speech on Unemployment Relief

June 4, 1940

I WAS pleased this evening to hear the minister of labor (Mr. McLarty) say that he did not intend to cut short the debate upon this resolution. In my opinion the resolution is one of the most important which as yet has come before this House.

All of us are aware that the people of Canada are watching carefully the deliberations which are going on here. I feel sure that they have watched and listened with great interest to what this government intends to do with regard to the prosecution of the war. But I should like to draw attention to this fact, that whatever happens in Europe, whatever happens with regard to our deliberations in this chamber, throughout the length and breadth of Canada every single day, three times a day, thousands of people are faced with this one great question: "When do we eat, and how?"

### Millions for War

IN THE past with regard to its domestic policy in looking after the people of this country who through no fault of their own find themselves destitute and without

employment, the government has not an enviable record.

Whenever it was suggested that money should be provided to assist those who were unemployed or to alleviate farm distress in the west, this government has replied: "Where is the money to come from? There is no money." Well, I would point out that when a war crisis appears, \$700,000,000 can be immediately found.

To many people in Canada the domestic crisis is one that looms as important in their minds as the war crisis. It affects the people of this country. It is vital to them, because the future of this country depends upon the welfare of its people. It is not so very long ago that we went through a great economic crisis. We found that the economic problem, the problem of unemployment, was not solved by this government.

### Boys Are Vagrants

WE HAD some of our best boys wandering from the east to the west, boys called vagrants. They were given very little assistance.

We had farmers in the west facing a situation which was be-



yond them, and they were absolutely unable to cope with it. The province of Saskatchewan particularly was brought to bankruptcy and the people of Saskatchewan looked to the federal government for assistance. They were faced with the same question: Where is the money to come from? In the opinion of Dr. Weir, minister of health of British Columbia, the evidence available shows that at least a third, or more likely a half, of all our Canadian people are existing on incomes of less than \$1,000 a year. When so many of our people are living on such an income, the question of health is going to be something which will be brought up by governments of the future as being a responsibility left over from these days.

We are not attempting to do anything toward the solution of this problem.

### Nothing for Health

**THE HEALTH** of a nation depends upon two things. It depends upon the standard of living of its people and it depends upon adequate health services. This federal government has done nothing, as a federal matter, with regard to health services throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The question of the standard of living of our people has also been sadly neglected. I believe that during the last war, during those four years of war, we Can-

adians lost 60,000 men. We have built a great memorial to them. They were soldiers who gave their lives in the great cause. Do hon. members realize that because of our lower standards of living, because of lack of good health services, in the four years that followed 1931 we lost 70,000 more soldiers—little fellows this time, under a year old, struggling in the greatest battle of life?

They lost out because this country did not equip them. These matters are a government responsibility. If we take into consideration also the mothers who gave their lives, and children under five years of age, we have in this four years a loss of 103,000 persons. Their names are not known. They are Canadian heroes who are "unwept, unhonored and unsung"; and if this government does not accept its responsibility towards the people, I am afraid that in generations to come it is going to be held responsible for this serious situation.

### Will Grow Worse

**WHATEVER** else the common people lack, they have one great asset: The common people have common sense. And, thank goodness, they are beginning to use it. We know that, owing to this government's policy during these last few days, in the months to come the living conditions of the Canadian people are going to grow steadily worse. I have no hesitation whatever about saying

that. I am sure that time will prove my statement correct.

During these last few weeks we have appropriated \$700,000,000 for the prosecution of the war, \$750,000,000 for the payment of loans, and so on. This government, following the policy of the past, is raising this money by taxation and by borrowing.

When the common people think of taxation, they think of what has been taxed in the past, and they realize that if this government taxes as it has always taxed, it will be the food, the clothing and the small pleasures of the common people which will be taxed, not the great wealth that lies in the hands of a few within this Dominion.

Therefore the living conditions of the people of Canada during the next few months are going to deteriorate.

We also know that, for the purpose of borrowing, this government will shackle generations yet unborn with a burden of debt which will be carried on to the future, and children not yet born will bear the debt of this war as we today are bearing the debt of the last war. The common people realize these things.

It was interesting to me the other evening to see that a bill was brought forward for the appropriation of \$100,000 to provide for the parks and open spaces in this city. Yesterday I received a letter from the northern part of

Saskatchewan. I should like to read it to the committee. It was sent to a man who is living away in the northern bush. I reads:

"Dear Sir:

*"Due to the fact that the government is unable to obtain sufficient funds to finance the present cost of relief, I have received instructions that only the most needy cases are to receive assistance. You are therefore advised that no further relief will be given you and that from now on no assistance will be given you under any circumstances.*

W. Schmidt,  
District Inspector."

The man who received this letter writes to me as follows:

*"Enclosed find a letter which most of us on relief received this month in place of our order. Despite the fact that just now there is hardly any of us who have funds, we have been cut off. You know how it is up here. My case is soon explained. Last fall I threshed 290 bushels of wheat and 490 bushels of oats. I got 31 cents a bushel for my wheat. I had to pay a \$36 threshing bill, \$14 for breaking, \$13 for taxes and for some other expenses such as cutting twine and so on. For three months I received no relief. During last winter I had \$5 a month relief for a family of five: three little children, three years, two years and one three months old. It looks as if that is*

*the kind of payment we are getting for not voting Liberal up here."*

That is only one instance.

MR. MCLARTY: Would the hon. member be kind enough to let me have a copy of that letter?

MRS. NIELSEN: I shall be most pleased to do so.

MR. MCLARTY: I shall see that the matter is investigated at once.

MRS. NIELSEN: Thank you. The question which northern Saskatchewan is facing at the present time is perhaps one of the most serious it has had to consider for some years. As some hon. members know, it was the southern part of Saskatchewan which suffered from the drought at one time, a situation which was acute; but during the last few years it has become noticeable that the drought belt has been moving northwards. I received another letter which I might read:

*"We are facing another terribly dry year. We have not had a rain to wet the roof of the house since the snow went, as you likely know. There was enough moisture in the summer fallows from the snow to start the wheat, but it cannot live much longer if we don't get rain. The grass is burning fast and the gardens not starting at all. The same old story."*

### Facing Failure

THIS was written on May 26

Hon. members can picture the plight of these people, cut off relief and facing a crop failure, as

far as they can judge at the present time. What are their reactions to the deliberations of this House? They are expecting that this government will at least continue with relief as it has done in the past and provide some better sustenance for the people. I have recently received from Saskatchewan a letter which will give the committee as nearly as possible the relief situation:

*"The relief inspectors have during the month of May informed the councils that the municipalities have to take care of the indigents who are residents of the municipality without any further assistance from the government. In the case of one of the municipalities, this has meant that whereas up until the end of May they received \$570 per month as a direct relief grant, they will not receive any further grants after the first of June, and that of course means that the resident ratepayers will have to be taxed to meet the additional costs imposed upon them. With farm commodity prices at their present levels and with the burden of debt from which the farmers already suffer, the additional taxation will create a very difficult situation."*

I suggest that this government make a serious and detailed study of the amount of assistance which is going to be needed by the farmers of the west during the coming years. I suggest that this government find the money for the people of this country who

are in need of it, as they have found the money for the war crisis; for the domestic crisis in this country is of equal importance and perhaps of more far-reaching importance.

MR. McLARTY: I understand that there are other matters

which require consideration. Obviously we are by no means finished with this debate. Therefore, I should like to move that the committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Progress reported.

---

## A Message to Youth

THE old order is crumbling, rocked by the thunderous roar of conflicting powers. It is your task to lay the foundations of a new world and, with courage, start to build that which you must inhabit in the future. You must decide the structure of society, for the world of the future must be wide and strong and beautiful.

To be practical, then, what must you do? Increase and enlarge all your organizations. Search in your own hearts and do not be afraid to express the needs of

humanity you find there.

Perhaps the first and most important thing is that you should mobilize public opinion—rank on rank, solidly behind you. Conscriptio[n] of wealth before life—might be your slogan. It must be a national campaign.

Remember that fears are like the gloom which disappears when the sun of understanding rises. And the people of Canada will not be long in understanding.—*From a letter read to the Fifth Canadian Youth Congress in Montreal, July 5.*



¶ *"If we neglect the welfare of the people, this House has no reason to pride itself upon being a representative body . . ."*

# Charity Begins at Home

## A Second Speech on Unemployment Relief

June 13, 1940

I HAVE already had an opportunity of speaking for a few minutes to this resolution, but a little while ago I sent to several people in my constituency an appeal asking them if they would give me a comprehensive word-picture of their own particular district so that I might give this House a clear indication of the need for federal aid in northern Saskatchewan.

Among those to whom I wrote were one or two school teachers, because a school teacher is often able to give a comprehensive viewpoint of the whole school district, and in that way the whole of the district may be fairly judged. One or two of the school teachers have already sent in reports to me.

I have one here from a teacher whom I have known for several years. He is a man whom I have every reason to believe would be very conservative in his estimates and for whom I have the greatest respect. I believe that he would give us the best picture he could of his own school district. This is not an isolated instance, and I want to give it to

the committee this evening because it is a picture of one school district in northern Saskatchewan which I believe some of the other members from northern Saskatchewan will be able to say is really one which might be found all over that northern district, particularly where we have people living on the re-establishment scheme.

I will read it exactly as it came to me:

### A NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

#### The District

"The soil is poor, the land uneven. Most of the farms are very stony. This is the picture after the trees have been grubbed out and roots picked. The total assessment is less than \$40,000 and it is very possible that \$15,000 in cash would buy all the land together with the improvements which are not assessed. There are approximately 500 acres under cultivation in the whole district.

#### The School

"Built of logs, with walls smoothed with thick coating of

mud. A gasoline drum for a stove. Several home-made desks. No desk work for the children; a library of half a dozen books, a blackboard of beaverboard painted over; a bell; a small hand globe completed the equipment.

### The Homes

"Log. Rough board floors. Insufficient dishes, cooking utensils and bed coverings.

### Finances

"They owe for the doors, the windows, the shingles, the purchased desks. They owe two previous teachers; and the present teacher, in 11 months, has received in cash at the rate of \$17 per month.

### The Parents

"Of the 22 parents in the 11 families of children attending school, 16 are reported as needing medical attention. Such statements as 'Father is sick all the time but has to keep working' or 'Mother is often sick in bed and the rest of the time does not feel very well' were common.

"When they are near death's door they will be sent to hospital, where they will either die or recover to some extent and be sent home, where they will find they are seriously behind with their work.

"One woman complained of headaches and was sent to have her eyes examined by the relief

officer. The report was to the effect that she needed glasses. The government paid for the examination but the relief officer decided that they must pay their way to another eye specialist some 100 miles away in order to make sure that glasses were needed.

"The woman has not gone, partly because these people are poor and also because there is no assurance that the report of the second examination will be acted upon. She has suffered for nearly two years since the first examination.

### The Families

"Seven of these families are under re-establishment, which means they do not own their land, livestock or meagre equipment. The seven families have altogether 19 horses, four colts, 34 cows, 32 other cattle including spring calves, seven sows and a few young pigs, and 191 poultry.

"The other four families are not under re-establishment. They have altogether 15 horses, five colts, 18 cows, 16 calves and young cattle, three sows and a few young pigs, and 130 poultry.

"These 11 families consist of 92 persons and this year they will have a total acreage, in crop, of approximately 240 acres. A very large portion of this, probably about 50 per cent, will have to be reserved, if crops are average, for oats for horses and feed for milch cows, pigs and chickens. We have,

therefore, 92 persons attempting to make their living from 125 to 150 acres, with grain prices what they are! All these families have been on relief although some have gone on as recently as last winter. Last winter relief averaged about \$8 per family. For the month of May this amount was cut in two—"

AN HON. MEMBER: Is that per month?

MRS. NIELSEN: That means they will get \$4 per family per month. It goes on:

"—and indications are that they may not get any more relief.

### The Children

"(a) *Their health.* Not being a medical man I can only give an estimate that very possibly all the children need medical attention to some extent, and several look as though their future health will be sadly impaired unless they get this attention in the near future.

"When I look over the school, breakings out of the skin were so common that it seemed unfair to keep the children at home. The school has been in operation for six years. No government school nurse has ever called. The only medical care the children receive is when fear of imminent death makes an emergency case for hospital.

"Twenty per cent of the children are out of school and on the sick list today. One boy of seven years stayed out of school because he was kicked in the stomach by

a calf. He does not want to eat and was even a bit delirious one night. We all think that it is "nothing" and expect he will be all right. If he gets much worse he will be one of these emergency cases.

"Another boy, out of school, accidentally hurt his nose. His face started to swell. Pus condition developed. The boy became delirious and in very severe pain. The relief officer and the councilor could not or would not do anything. Finally the father in desperation sold his seed wheat and took the boy to hospital. The diagnosis was a broken nose. The child later developed pneumonia. These two cases are still living today.

"(b) *School lunches.* Five families seem to have as a general rule a lunch of some plain and scanty variety. Six families have very poor lunches as the general rule. It is all a matter of degree. Today three families—ten children—have plain bread and butter."

And of course, as hon. members know, some of these country children walk two or three miles to school and then home again.

"Sometimes, especially in winter, it is bread and cheap jam. Occasionally it may be bread and lard or even dry bread and onions. The children of one family took some little pride in the fact that they had never had straight dry bread.

"(c) *Clothing.* In this matter we must realize that all the chil-

dren get either new or fairly good second-hand clothes. There is one family whose clothes are very poor and patched, but all seemed to take pride in the fact that they had a Sunday shirt at home. I have a girl, fifteen years old, at school today, wearing men's winter rubbers about two sizes too large; her sisters have patched running shoes. The boy, twelve years old, who is very intelligent, wears last winter's moccasin rubbers, with no socks, patched overall pants, with an honest but aged belt. All these children need clothing and better food at once. What it will be during the coming winter, I do not know. They need help on account of the small acreages, regardless of whether they have good crops or poor crops."

That, I think, Mr. Chairman, is a just and very conservative summary of the situation in the majority of the school districts in northern Saskatchewan.

MR. GOLDING: I would ask the hon. member to give the name of the writer of that article. I believe that, under the rule, that has to be done.

MRS. NIELSEN: I should be most pleased to do that, Mr. Chairman, but for one reason.

MR. GOLDING: Oh, no.

MRS. NIELSEN: In Saskatchewan, if a teacher does not always do as the school board in his district wishes him to do regarding

certain matters, he risks the loss of his job. Discrimination in Saskatchewan school districts against school teachers who have to rely entirely on the local school boards for their jobs is a matter which should have some investigation.

For that reason I feel that this teacher needs protection. I see no reason whatever for giving his name. I myself will accept responsibility for that statement; I think it is perfectly true.

THE CHAIRMAN: What document is the hon. member reading from?

MRS. NIELSEN: It is a private letter to me.

THE CHAIRMAN: And the hon. member takes responsibility for it?

MRS. NIELSEN: For the veracity of that statement, surely.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is in order.

MRS. NIELSEN: On May 31st last, as recorded in Hansard, page 459, the minister of labor (Mr. McLarty), when he was speaking about the bill which he intends to introduce, said this:

"There is an amendment by the elimination of what was Section 3 of the act of 1939. Broadly, that section provided that the Dominion itself would undertake works and projects in connection with the relief of unemployment and the promotion of employ-

ment. It was felt that owing to the wide activity that is taking place as a result of the unfortunate circumstances in which we find ourselves today, it would be unnecessary for the government to take measures under that particular section. But if works become of vital necessity and it is apparent that they are so, they can still be initiated by means of an estimate which would require presentation to this House."

It seems to me that, after the amount of evidence which has been given in this chamber of the need for continuation of relief, particularly in northern Saskatchewan, I may justifiably ask the minister of labor to consider, not bringing in an amendment of the act as it stands, but rather allowing a definite sum to be set aside for a continuation of relief in northern Saskatchewan.

MR. McLARTY: I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member, but I know she appreciates the fact that this portion of the act respecting material aid to which the hon. member refers under the Dominion-Provincial agreement will be included and continued.

MRS. NIELSEN: Thank you. These people who are living in that northern area and whose acreage today is not sufficient to give them a living, would be very willing to work. The building of roads and a railway through that northern area is greatly needed,

but the province of Saskatchewan is unable to finance these schemes.

Were the federal government to allow that province the money, the people of that northern area would be only too willing to work on the roads to supplement their scanty income and so improve this relief situation.

These families are self-respecting people and, as has been stated many times, they despise and dislike the idea of having to go on relief. They would work through the summer months if only a work-and-wages program were provided with the help of the federal government. If that could be done, it would have splendid results.

But if this government will not or cannot see its way clear to help in such a project where work and wages can be given to these people, then, as the hon. member for Humboldt (Mr. Fleming) says, they must have more aspirin; in other words, they must have better relief, because they are suffering more than any decent, honest people in this day and age.

They must have consideration from this government. After all, the welfare of the people is the primary concern of this House. If we neglect them, we have no reason to pride ourselves upon being a representative body looking after the welfare of our people.

¶ "I see in this bill a menace to democracy. I see that the working people in Canada are given no safeguards whatsoever . . ."

# Democracy Must Live

## Speech on the Mobilization Act

June 20, 1940

**I**T IS quite possible that today a great number of Canadians are asking themselves very sincerely and very earnestly where lies their duty and where their loyalty.

During this debate a number of government supporters have spoken and received the applause of this House. It is quite possible that what I am about to say this afternoon will not gain for me the approbation of hon. members sitting on the government side; yet I feel that the words I speak will find an echo in the hearts of thousands of our Canadian people.

In the past, from my own experience, I have realized that loyalty to this Liberal government and loyalty to the Canadian people have not always been one and the same thing. My loyalty, before everything, is to the Canadian people.

This is not the first crisis that has arisen in Canada. A few years ago we had an economic crisis which for depth and intensity was unequalled in the annals of

this country. How then did we find this government? Did we find them then declaring a state of emergency? Did we find them then conscripting the wealth of this nation, taking over the property and factories of those who could well afford to let them go, and starting the wheels of industry? Did they conscript our manpower and set the unemployed to work? Did they then show loyalty to the people of this country, giving them the aid and assistance they had to have in order to carry on with hope for the future?

I regret to say, Mr. Chairman, that I do not think this government did everything then that could be done to satisfy the human needs of the people of this country.

You know, Mr. Chairman, it is not by words but by acts that the people will judge you. It is by what you do, not by what you say. It is by what has happened in the past that people will judge how you are going to act in the future. I will say this, that in spite of the absolutely callous disregard of the needs of the people



in that last crisis, during the present one the very same people have come forward with the greatest loyalty any people could show. That is perfectly true.

Of this I am sure, that so long as there is any freedom in the world Canadian youth will fight to preserve it. So long as there is any liberty anywhere to be found, the youth of this nation will seek to keep it. So long as there is left one shred of democracy anywhere in the world our youth will come out gallantly to defend it, preserve it and extend it. I know that, because they have already proved it.

### "A Living Thing"

**MY** FRIENDS, democracy is a living thing. If you seek to bind and chain democracy, if you seek to keep it for a while without letting it live, and without permitting it to exercise itself, democracy will wither; it will die. I know that, too. You see, my friends, I am not unaware of the dangers, the fears and the destruction war may bring.

When I was a girl, I lived in a city where, for nights at a time, I hid in cellars to avoid bombs which were dropping all around in the surrounding district. Those were days of German air raids.

I know what fear is, and I know this today, that as much as I would fear the enemy in this country, an enemy which at any time may attack us, yet I also

fear one think just as much, and that is the loss of democracy within the borders of our country.

I fear that.

I say these things because if we lose democracy today, if we chain and bind it, who knows what tortuous years ahead will have to elapse before democracy can ever start to grow again? Even our unemployed, men to whom in the last few years this government has denied economic democracy, have come forward during this crisis to defend democracy.

There is no need to conscript those men, because of their own volition they are ready to defend these things.

I believe it was last night I heard one hon. member say that he had referred the matter to his constituency, because he felt the responsibility of deciding for or against conscription was too much for him to shoulder. Being faced with the necessity of referring the matter to his constituency in such a short time, it is remarkable that he was able to gain from that constituency any reply which could be considered at all satisfactory.

I do not know how in such a short time any reply could have been received which would be in any way comprehensive.

### Should Ask Youth

**BUT** I do know this: We have in Canada the youth of our nation. In the years to come they

will inherit the world we leave. What do the youth of this nation think about conscription? We could do nothing better than to ask them. They have not waited until this day, because we know that already numbers of them have registered their opinions in this matter.

It has already been brought to the attention of the House that in Canada we have what is known as a Canadian Youth Congress and Canadian Youth Council. It has been urged in the House that these organizations should no longer be considered legal. These young people of our nation, who have declared the great principles they uphold—first their belief in God; second, the right of individuals to private property; third, the necessity for internal peace and co-operation between all social classes, and, fourth, the sanctity of human personality—have already declared their feelings with regard to conscription.

This morning I received through the mail some information which no doubt other hon. members received. Roughly 4,000 replies have been sent in from the youth of Canada. Some will say that those 4,000 replies are not representative, but I would point out that in many instances the answers to the questionnaire were not the answers from one young person, but were in fact replies of small groups or collections of young people who con-

gregated for the purpose of making those replies.

Therefore I suggest that the number of young people those 4,000 replies represent is far greater than it would seem to be.

### Against Conscription

THOSE replies from the young people of Canada indicate that 74 per cent of their number are against any form of conscription whatsoever; 92 per cent say that conscription would adversely affect our democratic unity, and 80 per cent were in favor of a plebiscite. My friends, to a certain extent I believe those figures speak for themselves.

As to the bill, I would call attention to the general wording. I agree with some hon. members who urge that the wording of the measure should be much more specific before the people of Canada, either through their members in the House of Commons, or by themselves, are asked to vote upon it.

The people in my constituency definitely had the idea in mind at the time of the election that the matter of conscription would come before the House of Commons. They have stated definitely that before representatives in the House dared to give consent to conscription the people should be given the opportunity to express their views through a plebiscite.

You see, it is the young men who will die. It is the men and women who will sweat and toil in our war effort. It is the women of this country—those daughters of men, wives of men and mothers of men—who will say whether they want their men to go as free men, standing up in a free cause, or whether they will have them driven like cattle.

MR. GARDINER: Is the hon. member outlining the policy of the united reform group?

MRS. NIELSEN: Yes. It was included in our program at the time of the election. We said that we should have a plebiscite before conscription.

MR. GARDINER: That was not in the policy recently announced from the meeting they held a short time ago.

MRS. NIELSEN: I shall give the minister a copy of the program, if that will satisfy him.

MR. GARDINER: I have one of the last meeting; it was sent to me.

MRS. NIELSEN: That is fine.

I was speaking of the bill itself, and was pointing out that its wording is too general. So far as I can see there are no safeguards to protect either labor or the producers of primary products in coming months or years.

If at the present time we had the budget before us we might be in a position to see which section of our population was to bear the main burdens, and it would be somewhat easier for us to pass judgment.

So far as we can see today, amounts of \$700,000,000 and \$750,000,000 are to be raised by taxation and by borrowing and I am convinced that during the coming months the brunt of the load will be borne by those least able to carry it, namely, the ordinary workman in Canada.

I see in this bill a menace to democracy. I see that the working people in Canada are given no safeguards whatsoever; and as my constituents demand a plebiscite I feel I shall have to oppose the bill in its present form.

¶ "We have lost our political liberty through the Defence of Canada Regulations, and now in the proposed budget we face social and economic disaster . . ."

# Raise Your Voices . . .

## Speech on the Budget

July 2, 1940

**A**S THE representative of an agricultural riding where not only the farmers who have been long established but also those who have newly attempted to carve homes for themselves out of the wilderness of the north all find themselves in great distress, it has been my primary duty to attempt to place before this House a fair picture of conditions in my constituency.

Consequently, I have had a great deal of consideration from the minister of labor (Mr. McLarty), and he has promised an investigation into the particular conditions which I have outlined. During the weeks since I came here I have learned a great deal, not only in this House. I have visited some of the great cities of the east and I have come to the conclusion that the problems which face our western farmers are more or less the same problems which face the working people in the cities of the east.

I have watched the legislation introduced in this House. I must confess that when I came here I had great hopes that the great crisis facing this nation would force this

government to bring in constructive and progressive legislation really in the best interests and to the benefit of the people of Canada.

The budget debate follows very closely on the heels of the bill to conscript manpower and property. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, it proves that bill false. We were led to understand that the bill conscripting manpower and property would conscript the great reserves of wealth within the borders of this country. Now that the budget has been brought down, we realize that the great masses of the working people of Canada, out of their scanty earnings and low wages, will have to provide an enormous amount of money for our war effort.

### Cannot Remain Silent

**I** CAN no longer remain silent and support this government. My hon. friends to my right have opposed some legislation which has been introduced in this House; yet they have constantly affirmed their support of this government. I cannot do that. I do not, I will not support this government. After a careful appraisal of the policy of this government, I find that if I am

to remain loyal to the people who sent me here, it is impossible for me to support either this budget or the legislation which has been introduced by the government, and I am prepared to tell the people why that is so.

I know that anyone who dares to disagree with the policy of the government is accused of being disloyal and an enemy of Canada; but, as time goes on, I become more convinced that in the days to come those who support this government will be judged to be the real enemies of the Canadian people. As I see it, if I remained silent I should be disloyal to those whom I represent.

During this session this government has passed legislation to subjugate the Canadian people and force them into both political and economic bondage. To a large extent we have lost our political liberty through the Defence of Canada Regulations, and now in the proposed budget we face social and economic disaster.

The worst of it is that all this is proposed under the guise of patriotism. As everyone knows, our press is more or less controlled by the same powers that control the great financial institutions, the corporations and the monopolies of this country.

The press have led the people to believe that this budget calls for national sacrifice. They say it is an emergency budget to save Canada, to save the world, and that it will

bring about equality of sacrifice. We are told that we need some \$700,000,000 for the war and further sums for other expenses making a grand total of about a billion and a half dollars.

If the conscription bill had been what it purported to be, there would have been no necessity for the increased taxation, which will so greatly harass and burden those in the lower income brackets. There is wealth in this country, sufficient not only for the prosecution of this war to even a greater extent than we are now prosecuting it, but also to rehabilitate our people.

### **"We Face Two Crises"**

**T**ODAY, Mr. Speaker, we are facing two great crises. We have a war crisis and a domestic crisis. If anyone says that a domestic crisis does not exist, I can only say it is because they do not wish to see it. There are none so blind as those who will not see. When we say that the war crisis is the only crisis which matters, we are absolutely failing the Canadian people.

Provision could have been made to meet both these crises if the government had not been the mouthpiece of the great financial interests of this country, as it always has been.

Government spokesmen have told the people that the incomes of the wealthy are to be taxed so that they will help bear the cost of the war. That hides the real truth

from the people. It is possible for the great monopolies, the great industrial corporations, to increase their capital by millions of dollars without paying any tax except for a very small portion which they may set aside for certain purposes.

They can increase their capital and set aside enormous amounts for reinvestments without ever coming under the taxation laws of this dominion.

They have certain surpluses of capital which, under our laws, may be exempt from immediate taxation. That is where any government, working in the future interests of the Canadian people, would have looked for reserves with which to finance not only this war but also a rehabilitation scheme for the people still in distress in this country.

The minister has acknowledged that even with the increased taxation proposed he will not have sufficient money to prosecute the war, and he says that we must meet the rest of our obligations by borrowing. Where will he turn? Of course he will go to these vast reserves of capital which, instead of being loaned to the government, should be conscripted.

It amounts to this: During the last great economic crisis these reserves of capital were already in existence, but at that time it was not profitable to lend them for the rehabilitation of our people. In this war crisis today, however, it is profitable not to have this great

wealth conscripted but rather to loan it to the people of Canada for the prosecution of the war.

That is so because the people who loan this money are the same people who will have the advantage of possessing huge sums of money with which to go ahead with new industries for the production of munitions and so on.

Now it is profitable for them to show their patriotism and loan their money. But it is not the kind of patriotism that is being demanded of them by means of conscription, as it should be.

### Must Give Sons

THE WORKING people are asked to give their sons. Our working men will go into the factories. As time goes on they will find that their wages will become more meagre and the real value of their money will be decreased.

The situation today is the same as it was in 1914. Then the people thought the greater part of the war burden was to be borne by the wealthy, but in 1918 the people found that they themselves had borne the brunt of the sacrifice, not only through the giving up of their sons but also through the piling up of debt.

The farmers of our country will go on with their unremitting toil, and what guarantee have they that in the years to come they will be able to establish for themselves a decent standard of living?

These things are all part of the domestic crisis which we as a res-



possible body cannot and must not neglect. The Canadian people are going to be told what is their patriotic duty.

During the last war we made sixty new millionaires in Canada, and we sacrificed 60,000 men. That meant roughly the lives of a thousand men for every new millionaire created; and during that period the debt of the people increased. In 1914 our per capita debt amounted to \$42.64, while at the end of the war period, after we had created sixty new millionaires, the per capita debt had increased to \$266.37.

#### More Millionaires?

AS FAR as I can see, the same sort of thing will go on during this war. No one can say at the present time how many new millionaires we are going to create, but from the legislation which has been passed by this House already, I feel sure that we shall continue to increase the number of wealthy people in this Dominion and add a further burden of debt to the shoulders of the working people during the years to come.

That is not what we understood by the conscription bill which has just been passed. It is not the kind of legislation which we, as representatives of the people, should allow to pass through this House of Commons.

The borrowing of vast sums of money will create unadulterated inflation at the expense of the Canadian people. The great interests

will not suffer enormously through these coming years.

Roughly \$700,000,000 will be taken out of the purchasing power of the people, and at the same time the shackles of debt will be tied round the Canadian people, like millstones round their necks, to make of them slaves into the future. And children who are not yet born will be among them.

#### Will Affect All

NOT ONLY will it affect the people who are today destitute and barely managing to live, but it will affect hundreds, yes, thousands of the middle-class people who will lose their scanty savings, and be forced down to a degree of poverty unnecessary and unneedful in a country of great wealth such as this.

After all, for what reason are the youth of Canada being conscripted? The government says it is for home service. That is true enough.

What are they to protect at home? Besides the homes of their own people it is their duty to protect the great corporations, the banks and the factories—all those organizations which in the past have cared so little for the youth of Canada that during the late crisis they refused to lend their money, let alone have their money conscripted, for the rehabilitation of our people.

The most patriotic procedure for the government to take would be to go to these vast reserves of

capital which, if unmolested, will be used for reinvestment, and from this money finance not only the prosecution of this war but a rehabilitation scheme for our people.

I noticed that on Friday last an hon. member of the official opposition—I believe it was the hon. member for Danforth (Mr. Harris)—referred to the position of the Canadian people. In his speech he said:

*"I am afraid our Canadian people have not been as provident as they might have been, particularly the younger people. In my own home I have four people driving cars, so I think I know what I am talking about. Our people have not been provident; they have been reckless; there has been too much wasteful spending."*

The fact that a man has four people driving cars is no indication that he knows what he is talking about. I am sorry to say that in my opinion what the hon. member for Danforth said merely shows, or goes to prove, that one-half of the world does not know how the other half lives.

In 1935 roughly 56 per cent of our people were earning less than \$1,000 a year. Yes, even with the most careful budgeting, in that year 56 per cent of our people had only sufficient to manage to live, let alone really enough to take care of hospital bills, or matters of that kind.

We who are the Canadian people are not in a position to waste

our money, for the simple reason that we have scarcely enough to manage to live. I believe the observation of the hon. member for Danforth shows on his part a lack of knowledge respecting the Canadian people.

In 1934 two-thirds of our industrial workers, that is, about 1,617,000 of them, earned on an average \$360 a year. I wonder how there could be any wasteful spending for them.

Then, our farmers averaged about \$474 in that year, and in some instances that amount had to provide for large families.

I believe that if we fully realized the way in which the majority of Canadian people have had to live, in the last few years, we would understand that not only have they been unable to waste money, but they have been unable really to live decently, or to live as people of this day and age, and in a country such as this, should be able to live.

### Added Burdens

NOW THEY are having an added burden placed upon their shoulders. How the people are going to carry that burden in the next few months, or maybe years, I have no idea.

Of course since 1935 we have had even greater technical improvements. The volume of industrial output in 1937 was the same as in 1929, but in the latter year we used 1,500,000 fewer men.

In 1920 the Canadian railroads

employed 185,000 men, whereas in 1937, despite increased transportation, they employed only 125,000 men.

Consequently, in addition to those people receiving low incomes, we have today people who are unemployed and others on agricultural relief.

I have been interested recently in letters received from my constituency. I learn that out there relief schedules have been cut to a point where families of two persons are receiving aid at the rate of *only \$4 a month*.

A short time ago I made inquiries as to the amount it costs to keep a man in an internment camp, and I found that the cost of keeping such a man is practically the same as that for a soldier. In other words, it costs 35 cents a day or *about \$10.50 a month*.

It is peculiar that the government can spend \$10.50 a month on each of a group of interned aliens, but that it can afford only \$4 a month to provide for two of our own citizens. There is something wrong with a government which permits such things to happen.

I am not saying that the men in the internment camps should not be kept decently, but I am saying that the government should take far greater heed of the necessities of our people, and should do more to establish them and give them an opportunity to live decently even in this time of crisis.

I believe it was Mr. Churchill

who told the English people that he had nothing to offer them but blood, grief, tears and toil. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that in his budget the minister of finance (Mr. Ralston) promised the Canadian people nothing but misery, despair, destitution and fear.

At the same time he did nothing to cause fear in the hearts of the owners of great wealth, or in the hearts of members of corporations, banks and industrial institutions throughout the country.

What are the people being forced to do? First of all, the income tax in the lower brackets is not the only difficulty people with lesser means will have to face. As time goes on, those people earning around \$600 or \$700 a year will find that their earnings will not go as far as they do today, and I believe they will learn that within a few months

Already—and we have government authority for this statement—their cost of living has gone up by about 4 per cent. Gradually we shall find that our great industries will take over more and more of the war industries. They will cease to produce as many goods and services required by the people.

That in turn will create a rise in prices, and the result will be that in a few months' time the incomes of our people certainly will not go as far as they do today.

The 10 per cent increase in the import tax will increase the cost of goods, and will certainly add to

the price of food and clothing.

I believe that tax will bring in around \$65,000,000, a great part of which will come out of the profits of that 65 per cent of our Canadian people whose incomes are so tremendously low, and who today are not getting what they should have. Yet the government expects only about \$100,000,000 from the excess profits tax.

I say the import duty protects the wealthy and the corporations, and yet those same corporations by law can evade taxation of their capital gains.

During the months of the war it will be possible for them to amass enormous reserves of capital. But of course that capital is something in the nature of a golden calf set up in our country, something we are forbidden to touch. That is a precedent which has been created, one which even in this time of crisis the government is going to continue to protect.

Our men must suffer; they must give their lives. Our people must toil unremittingly. They will be forced to accept wages set for them. They will be forced to accept conditions, under the Defence of Canada Regulations.

Yet at the same time the conditions I have described will go on, and our financial system will continue to create greater wealth for the few and greater poverty and misery for the masses.

Our men will go to work day after day with that feeling of frus-

tration and hopelessness, and our women in their homes will see the peaked faces of their children. Despite all this, they will have absolutely no way of bettering their condition. That is said to be the sacrifice which is demanded of the people because of war.

My conviction is that this sacrifice is not necessary. I contend that we could not only prosecute the war but rehabilitate our people without placing such a tremendous burden upon those who are unable to bear it.

There is one thing that the Canadian people should be told, and told quickly, namely, that we should not accept everything which this government tells us as being the absolute truth. As soon as this session is over, if the opportunity is accorded me, I shall do everything possible to let the people know why I have not been able to support this government in its war measures.

In my opinion there is no reason why the people should have to believe these things any longer. I wonder how long it will be before the people really realize the unnecessary burden which the government has put upon them. I cannot think it will be very long.

### Disloyal Budget

I BELIEVE the government realized months ago that during this war crisis the people's wisdom and natural understanding of things would come to their aid and that they would rebel against un-

just legislation and the unjust burden of taxation which might be placed upon them.

This government had the Defence of Canada Regulations prepared which are instruments of coercion to be used in the future upon our Canadian people.

To say that this budget is patriotic is in itself untrue. It is not a patriotic budget. It is most unpatriotic and disloyal to the Canadian people.

There are many people in this country who supported this government through the last few years in the belief that should a crisis arise, the government would do certain things and take certain measures to alleviate the condition of the people. Yet today we find that so little is being done.

Already the people are beginning to take matters into their own hands to some extent. I have a letter which was sent to me from the northern part of Saskatchewan. I believe it is a good thing that the people are taking matters into their own hands and writing letters; otherwise we would not get to know about what is happening.

This letter states that at a council meeting 20 householders threatened that if they could not get immediate help they would help themselves. They stated that they had nothing at home to eat.

This was simply a spontaneous reaction to the condition which faces some of our people.

As I say, I shall do everything

possible to support the people, especially the mothers, in their just demands. It has been said that the female of the species is more deadly than the male. That is perfectly true.

When Canadian mothers are forced to watch their children become emaciated because they lack those things which children in this country should have, those mothers have a right to raise their voices in protest.

I can only hope that the women of this Dominion will raise their voices as one united voice and protest against the legislation which has been passed and against the unjust budget which has been imposed upon them.

All expenditures which would be of benefit to the Canadian people have been decreased by this government. There is a decrease of \$4,827,273 in the agricultural estimates. We find that old-age pensions and pensions for the blind have been decreased by \$4,620.

We find a decrease of \$350,000 in the estimates for youth training and a decrease of \$12,170,310 in the estimates for direct relief. There is a decrease of \$14,845 in the estimates for child and maternal hygiene, and a decrease of \$14,540 in the estimates for publicity and health education.

Pensions and national health estimates have been cut by \$795,696, while there has been a decrease of \$80,000 in the estimates for projects and schemes for veterans.

assistance.

In the case of public works, which would provide employment for many, there has been a decrease of \$17,016,794.

Everything which would encourage our people and give them an opportunity to become self-supporting and perhaps be in a position to make a further contribution

to this war effort is being cut down by the government.

I cannot find words strong enough to condemn this budget. As I said before, I hope the people of this country, realizing that there is no necessity for this added burden which is being placed upon them, will raise their voice unitedly in protest.

---

## Two World Records

**M**R. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I can say that the maternal death-rate and the child mortality rate are lower in Canada than in any other country of corresponding size and are not higher than those of the republic to the south of us.

MRS. NIELSEN: I was wondering, Mr. Chairman, where the minister obtained his figures when he said that our maternal death-rate was not bad. In a pamphlet entitled Canada's Health, by the Hon. George Hoadley, division on public health and medical services, published by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (Canada), I find that the statistics for 1936 for 26 leading countries of the world show that only four had a higher maternal death-rate than Canada. We were 22nd on the list. It also shows that the average age for mothers dying is 31 years, and we lose a mother every eight hours, three mothers a day. On the average we are losing, according to the figures given in this pamphlet:

A mother every eight hours or three a day.

Fifty-four children under five years every day.

Forty-two children under one year every day.

Twenty-four children still-born (or who lived less than 24 hours) every day.

It seems to me that this is a record of which any civilized nation should be thoroughly ashamed. A problem like this cannot be neglected. The whole future of our race depends upon its solution. More than 50 per cent of all the people of Canada are women, and that means that even in wartime these health services should be carried on and have more money allocated to them because conditions in Canada are deplorable.

MR. SLAGHT: Regretting as we all do the deaths that have been indicated, I think I owe it to my constituency, in which Callander is situated, to say that we have a world record of another kind as well.—*House of Commons, July 15, 1940.*



¶ "In the past the western pioneers went out to carve themselves homes out of the wilderness; today that spirit is leading them to carve a little justice out of this government . . ."

# Declare War on Poverty!

## Speech on the Wheat Board Act

Aug. 1, 1940

**D**URING this session many matters have come up in connection with which opinions have been quite divided, but I think all of us are of the same opinion that the question of agriculture is one of unprecedented importance. Not only does the crisis now existing in western Canada affect the people of the west, it affects the people of the whole country. Therefore, it should have the consideration of every hon. member, whether or not he comes from an agricultural constituency.

I was sorry this afternoon to hear one or two hon. members infuse a little dose of politics into their speeches. In connection with this matter we should forget party politics. This is something which has to do with the well-being of the Canadian people and we should not let party politics interfere with it.

Hon. members from all sides have tried to present the case for agriculture, but in the majority of instances they have underestimated the effects of the government policy. There is no need to enlarge or to overestimate these effects be-

cause the truth itself is terrible enough.

When the provincial governments were presenting their briefs to the Rowell commission three years ago, the Liberal government of Saskatchewan presented theirs. I should like to quote from the brief presented by that government in 1937, as follows:

*"From the material already submitted, the conclusion is easily drawn that the economic well-being of the people of Saskatchewan at the present time is not high. For the farmer we find mounting debts, in large part secured upon his land, and rapidly deteriorating capital equipment with which to work. For the great bulk of the population of Saskatchewan, living conditions have been on or only just above the subsistence level during the past few years."*

Although that report was made by a Liberal government, in my opinion it was a conservative report. Since that time the economic well-being of the people of the west has not materially increased. We have the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act; we have the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, and we have other attempts on the part

of this government to help the farmer, but I submit that they are all pale palliatives, that they but scratch the surface without going down deep to the roots and causes of the distress of agriculture.

### Price of Wheat

**WE HAVE** now had a declaration of government policy. We are to have 70-cent wheat again this year. We are to have a continuation of the grain exchange, and we are told that a part of this year's crop must be stored because we already have an enormous surplus. The people of the west are asking only for justice, and yet I would say that by a continuation of this policy, by the increased cost of living caused by our new budget and the increased cost of production which results from the increased import duties, this government is demanding as it has never demanded before, Shylock-wise, its pound of flesh from the western people.

In 1939 we had 70-cent wheat, which, contrary to the opinion that so many eastern people hold, does not bring our western farmers anything like 70 cents a bushel for their wheat. That has already been stated in the House. Our farmers who were able to produce No. 1 northern received at their western elevators last year 49 to 50 or 51 cents a bushel.

Some of them, because they lacked the proper machinery, or because, perhaps, they lacked the help which they should have had

in the spring to put in their crop, or lacked, perhaps, the money to buy new and better seed, got not No. 1 northern but lower grades.

Some had to grow Garnet wheat, with the result that they got only from 33 to 39 cents a bushel for their wheat at the country elevators. Yet at our local stores when we went to buy provisions we found that we had to pay \$3.35 for a sack of flour weighing 98 pounds. When one reckons that up, it will be found that a farmer has to pay from seven to ten bushels of wheat for one sack of flour; and if a bushel weighs roughly around sixty pounds, a calculation will reveal that the western farmers had to sell from 420 to 600 pounds of wheat to buy 98 pounds of flour.

If that is the basis of exchange, Mr. Speaker, which the government think can keep the western farmer on his feet, there is something wrong with their calculations. It is not a profit which the western farmer is demanding; it is a parity price which will enable him to buy the goods which he needs for more than a mere subsistence level.

### Aid to Profits

**WE HAVE** now a 15-cent levy imposed on the milling corporations. On the surface it looks like a tax upon those corporations but in my opinion it is just one more good excuse for the millers to increase their profits.

The minister of trade and com-

merce (Mr. MacKinnon) acknowledged this afternoon that in one instance, in Montreal or somewhere near that city, bread has already increased in price. I heard that it had increased at the rate of one cent a loaf. We are hoping that it will not increase generally, but we have no guarantee that it will not.

Nothing will satisfy me to the contrary except when this government will guarantee a pegged price for bread as well as a pegged price for wheat.

Is it necessary that we must starve Canadian children to win this war, and yet at the same time allow industry to make profits? Why does this government not peg bread at a price lower than it is today and let the millers take the rap just as the farmers have had to take it in years gone by?

We live in a country which is vast and potentially wealthy. We have roughly 11,000,000 of a population, which is very, very small compared with most of the European countries. We may also, according to the former minister of finance (Mr. Ralston) in presenting his budget, expect a national income this year of anywhere from four and a half to five or five and a half billion dollars. Consider that.

To prosecute this war we are told that we must spend probably one billion or one billion and a half dollars of our national income of five or five and a half billion

dollars, and we have only 11,000,000 people to feed and clothe.

Why should we have to starve any of our people to prosecute this war? Is it not logical; it is not sensible, and it is not human. I care nothing for parties or politics.

I appeal to the government on the ground that they are men, that they know what it is to see children wanting food, and will do something and not just talk so much about these problems.

### **"Why Not Eat Cake?"**

IT IS recorded in history that many years ago the people went to a certain queen and said to her, "The people are starving, they have no bread," and the reply which has been brought down to us in history was "Then why don't they eat cake?" Sometimes I think the callous disregard of this government toward the starving people of the west is comparable only to that example recorded in history.

This afternoon, when the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Douglas) was speaking, a voice from the Liberal benches at the other end called out, "Don't worry. The people of the west won't starve." I am sorry that there was such an expression of ignorance in this House because I contend that there are starving people in the west today because, let it be remembered, man does not live by bread alone.

We have had starving people, and if this government continues with its policies we shall have more of these starving people. I am sorry

to see a smile on the faces of some of the hon. members opposite. These are not smiling matters.

MR. HOMUTH: They are laughing at themselves.

MRS. NIELSEN: I hope so. I wish, Mr. Speaker, that we had members in this House who had had experience. I see that some of my hon. friends are raising their hon. eyebrows, but I repeat, I wish we had men of experience, men who knew what it was to be hungry. When I went to school I had to repeat these lines from Julius Caesar:

*"Let me have men about me that  
are fat;*

*Sleek-headed men and such as  
sleep o' nights.*

*Yon Cassius has a lean and  
hungry look."*

Now that I find myself happily in that position I wish I had more men beside me with a lean and hungry look, men who knew from their own bitter experience what it was to be hungry, what it was to wonder where the next meal was coming from, men who were lean because they had lived intimately with starvation as thousands of our Canadian people have had to do in these last few years. Perhaps, then, we would more truly represent the needs of the people than does this government.

If the government persists in its policy of giving 70 cents for wheat, I cannot see anything for thousands of our western farmers but that they will be forced to apply

for relief. At the present time thousands of them have been forced to apply for relief, and a family of nine is receiving, in my part of Saskatchewan, \$8 a month.

I believe I heard somewhere once that the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals made application to the Saskatchewan legislature for certain grants, and I believe it was said that when they picked a small cur off the roads it cost them around ten cents a day to feed it and if it was a large dog, about 15 cents. That would be roughly around \$3 a month.

### **\$1 a Month**

YET, we expect our people in the west to live on \$1 a month, or less than it costs to keep a cur picked up off the road. That possibility is a matter which has not been discussed in this House and has not been even thought of by many hon. members.

I can see nothing for the people of the west, if the government continues its present policy, but they will be reduced to a level comparable with that of European peasantry. They are very near that already.

At different times in this House I have heard several hon. members attempt to guard the rights of business or of various corporations.

I wonder whether they would lie down and keep quiet, as they expect the farmers and the farmers' representatives to do, if their own interests were being crushed and reduced as are the interests of

western agriculture at this time. I feel quite sure that those same hon. members would rise in their places and protest vociferously.

Not only would they speak in this House, but they would act in various ways. They would send advocates to the government; they would set up committees; they would find various means of presenting their case, and insisting that their interests should be protected.

If this government persists in its present policy — and although speakers in this House have presented the case for agriculture, I cannot see that all their arguments have made this government alter its policy one jot or tittle.—I feel convinced that the only reply which the western people can make is that they shall organize to protect their own industry and their own interests. They will have to do so; for it seems clear that in this House, with all the talking, no action is taken.

After all, if the farmers do this, they will be doing no more than industry has done. Industry has protected itself. It demanded that the limitation of five per cent on its profits should be removed. The western farmers are not demanding a profit; they are demanding just a livelihood, a living and a home.

#### **“Farmers Must Organize”**

**THEY** must organize to protect their own interests as industry has done to protect itself. Let no

hon. member on the government benches say that the farmers in doing this, will be disloyal to Canada or the Canadian people. By protecting themselves they will be loyal to the truest interests of Canada. In this day and age they cannot be forced down to serfdom.

If the farmers of the west were to present their case to this government, there are certain proposals which, I feel sure, they would have to make in order to enable themselves to carry on through these coming months. One cannot blame them for fighting for existence. The first law of life is that of survival. The western farmers must fight for that right in the same manner as any other group.

**First**, I would suggest, as a program for the west, that the price which this government must guarantee to western farmers should be no less than \$1.25 a bushel at the terminals. When one considers the increased cost of production and the higher costs of living, and when one recalls how inadequate was the price of 70 cents last year, a guarantee of \$1.25 at the terminals, which would mean roughly \$1 at the country elevators, would possibly be just sufficient to allow the farmers to get by.

**Second**, I would suggest that the government buy through the wheat board all the wheat of the western farmers. If someone asks where the money is to be obtained to buy this wheat, I would say that early in the session the House

granted \$700,000,000 for the prosecution of the war.

There were no specific items included and I would say that the government should take some of that money to buy western wheat; they should use that money to wage war on poverty, which is an enemy within our country as dangerous to our people as our enemies abroad. It would be part of the prosecution of the war to use money for that purpose.

**Third**, this government should start immediately to provide work in the west to some of our men who, contrary to the general opinion, are still unemployed through no fault of their own.

The government should start to build storage elevators. Already demands are coming from the west, from the city of North Battleford and surrounding districts, and from various farmers' locals, that the government build a large storage elevator in the middle of Saskatchewan, where they believe it will be safe from enemy action, and where enormous quantities of wheat can be stored.

**Fourth**, there should be a moratorium on farm debts during the war.

**Fifth**, bread prices should be reduced, as I said before, at the expense of the millers, so that home consumption will be increased. Were every man, woman and child in Canada to have as much as they desired of this staple commodity, bread, we would increase

our home consumption considerably.

The present level of consumption merely proves that our people are not able to afford as much as they would like to have.

The **sixth** point, which also has been mentioned, is that when the Hudson Bay route, which cost around \$50,000,000, was constructed, it was understood that it should be used in the interests of western people. I believe I am correct in saying that in the first six years that the Hudson Bay route was operated, freight rates on the great lakes were cut from around nine cents to somewhere around four and a half cents a bushel. The advantage of this to the western farmer is evident to everyone.

**Another point**, and one which I believe is worthy of consideration, relates to loss of markets. In my opinion, if the old markets are gone, we should seek new ones. I believe that some could be found if we had an enterprising government. First, there is China. Second, there is Russia.

### Trade with Russia

**THERE** are many hon. members who believe that whatever England does with regard to various matters is quite suitable for us to do. Today England is negotiating with Russia with a view to a new economic relationship. Why should this country fail to seize an opportunity to dispose of wheat, if it can, in order to lessen the bur-



den of the surplus which we already have?

On many occasions the government has pleaded for unity. They say that for the prosecution of this war we must have a united people. I would say to them: If you continue with this policy, how on earth can you hope to have unity? With every step of this policy you are alienating people in western Canada. How do you suppose they are going to feel as time goes on?

They are asked to accept conscription, to accept registration, to be regimented; at the same time you are forcing them to submit to starvation. How do you suppose they will react to these things?

They are not yet serfs. They still have some of that pioneer spirit which rebels, rightly and justly, against treatment of this kind. That spirit is not dead; on the contrary it is very much alive and growing in the west today; and where in the past the western pioneers went out to carve themselves homes out of the wilderness, today that spirit is leading them to carve a little justice out of this government.

I believe that when the people of the west are called upon to register, thousands of them will register at the same time a protest that it is neither fair nor just to expect them to submit to existing economic conditions and at the same time to register and be regimented. They would be right in protesting in such a manner.

I cannot feel that talking in this House will do very much with regard to this question any more than it has done with regard to other questions, because, as I said before, with all the talk in this House, I cannot see where this government has once altered its policy.

Therefore there is only one thing left to do. The people of the west must organize themselves to defend their own interests, send their demands to this government and make their voice heard. If their voice is too far away in Saskatchewan, then they must come to Ottawa so that it can be heard.

Perhaps they would be a rather ragged army were they to come, not very well equipped for a long walk; but men, when they are hungry and their children are starving, will do many things which otherwise they would not do.

In conclusion, let me say this. The people of the west must defend themselves and organize to demand the means of their existence. This is only just and fair. The pioneer spirit which led them in the past will lead them in the future.

They must cut down the trees of the economic wilderness into which this government has led them, and with courage and determination they must build for themselves a new home and a new heritage in that glorious west.

¶ Only firm, decisive, united action can save us from the disaster which threatens to engulf us. . . . In our own hands lies our destiny . . ."

# We Are Not Alone

Call to the Western Farm Emergency Conferences

Sept. 21, 1940  
**F**OR TEN long years a heavy burden has weighed upon the courage of our people of western Canada. We have felt the unrelenting grip of the most widespread economic crisis of agriculture ever experienced. We have seen our hopes wither and die in the furnace of the drought; fall before the hordes of grasshopper plagues; rot in the rust which science has only now overcome.

Poverty and anxiety have been our constant companions, and our life has been days, weeks, months of unrelenting toil and struggle; our only reward still more labor.

Nor have we been spendthrift and prodigal in our ways. Our homes are innocent of paint, weatherbeaten and drab. Our buildings sag and open at the seams for the wind and rain. Our farm machinery bears the stamp of antiquity, the wear and tear of much work, and is precariously held together with wire and makeshift repairs. Our children are ill-clothed, ill-educated, and there is for them little of the brightness of happy childhood.

Yet we have not been without our generosity. Denied, and deny-

ing, ourselves and our families even necessities, our labor has produced great wealth; riches that could mean happiness for ourselves and our people. We have poured the fruits of our labor into the laps of the mortgage companies, the farm implement monopolies, the grain speculators.

The buccaneers of private industry have crept aboard the ship of agriculture, and with the weapons of tariffs, high freight rates and the propped-up prices of protected goods, have overcome the farmer and bound him hand and foot.

Our government, conveniently short of memory in respect of the promises it made in order to win our support, forgetful of the honored praise it bestowed on us in the name of our past sacrifices, denying those words it addressed to us, in the name of Patriotism, to make our contribution in the national war effort by our work as producers of food, has turned its hand against us.

It has used our own great productive effort as a weapon which will beat down our living standard even below the poverty level which has sustained us for so long. The

arbitrary crop "policy" introduced by the government through its dictatorial "orders-in-council," has condemned us to a living death of minimum existence. *Our grave will be hundreds of millions of bushels of the finest cereal product in the world — our western Canadian wheat.*

### "A Golden Flood"

**DAY BY DAY** a golden flood of grain pours into elevators, grain bins, rickety, bursting farm sheds, and spills over on to the earth. One of the greatest crops we have ever produced piles higher and higher throughout our western country.

It appears that the government policy is designed to permit us to harvest our crop and then slowly starve while we and our families peacefully contemplate the mountainous store of grain we have produced. And as grim consolation in our hour of need we may recite to ourselves the following words:

*"It appears to me that there may be a problem to provide that farmers in a position to live through the winter as a result of having received any amounts obtained. This would appear under our constitution to be a problem to be dealt with by the provinces, municipalities and creditors (?) working in co-operation with the farmers."*—HON. J. G. GARDINER, minister of agriculture, Canadian Press dispatch, August 20.

Thus he off-handedly tossed the problem into the laps of our bank-

rupt provincial and municipal authorities. We have heard a lot about "equality of sacrifice" in the past few months. Let us contrast this gem of wisdom with another quotation:

*"In the early months of the war efforts were made to let all contracts by tender and to impose fixed profit limits on industry. These obstacles to production have lately been removed and a system of consultations instituted which provides industry with the power to choose itself where and how the materials of war can best be produced."*—Article on Canada's war effort in the Wall Street Journal.

*Equality! What crimes are committed in thy name!*

### United Action Vital

**WE ARE NOT** alone in this critical hour. The policy so carefully enunciated by our government is a rope which will strangle the whole economic life of the west. The individual merchant and small businessman, the rural and small-town school teachers, the doctors, the workers in towns and cities whose livelihood depends primarily upon a healthy agricultural economy—all of these too will feel the cold hand of privation in the coming months of winter.

This is no time for despair. Only firm, decisive, *united* action can now save us from the disaster which threatens to engulf us and those who depend on us. Only immediate protest, on the part of those most concerned, can frighten

away the spectre of misery which is haunting the west.

The conference recently convened by Premier Bracken of Manitoba has returned empty-handed. It can serve us as a signpost to point the road we must travel. But it is not enough. More, much more, is now needed. *In our own hands lies our destiny!*

There are those in high places who will greet our efforts on our own behalf with the cry that we are unpatriotic, that we are hindering the fight for democracy. Is it patriotic that we and our families should uncomplainingly face a sentence of starvation? Is there anything of the spirit of democracy in permitting an inimical government policy to condemn half of our country to bankruptcy?

---

From farmer to farm, we address this urgent call:

*We have produced with our hands and labor untold wealth. Privation did not deter us; setbacks did not make us quitters; barefaced robbery did not make us bitter; and even though the passing years brought some of our visions to be as ashes in our mouths, still we did not lose our confidence that, in the end, what would come would repay us and our children for what had gone before. Let us now, with the same courage and faith, address ourselves to the task of rescuing a portion of the wealth we have produced. Let us gather together our forces and prepare to take such action as will provide ourselves and our families the means of life.*

¶ "In my opinion . . . the first line of the defence of democracy must be here in Canada."

# Defend Democracy In Canada *Now!*

## Speech on the Defence of Canada Regulations

**M**R. SPEAKER: In looking over the material I thought I might need in speaking this evening, at first I found it a little difficult to decide just which things were of the greatest importance and should be mentioned in the time I have at my disposal.

The other evening I listened to the minister of agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) speak about the problems of agriculture. I listened to him outline what has been done. I also listened to the compliments paid by the minister of agriculture to himself. Yet I fail to see what this government is going to do about the wheat situation, especially in Saskatchewan, and it is possible that I should devote some of my time this evening to a discussion of that problem.

With regard to our war effort, it is necessary that this government should take a decided step towards safeguarding the health of our people through the coming years, because everyone will agree, I believe, that after the years of suffering which a great number of our people have had to endure, through lack of medical services,

through malnutrition and undernourishment, we are going to see a serious loss in working hours if our people do not have some help in that direction on a national scale. Some system of health insurance should be attempted at this time.

### "A Way of Living"

**T**HERE is, however, one subject which is at this time more relevant than any other to the conditions that prevail in Canada, and to this subject I shall give my attention. I refer to the question of democracy itself.

We are told that faith without works is of no avail and we also know that ideals, unless they are put into practice, are valueless. Democracy is a way of living, not just an ideal . . . and so I wish this evening for a while to consider the case for Canadian democracy.

I have listened in this House at various times to tributes that have been paid to the French-speaking people of this nation, tributes in which I have been very much pleased to associate myself, because I know what a great contri-

bution they have made to Canada in the past and I am sure they will make a similar contribution to the history of this country in the future.

The other evening I was happy indeed to hear the minister of agriculture compliment the English people, particularly since — although Canada is the land of my adoption—England is the land of my birth; and I was more than happy to hear him pay a tribute to the people of London, my old home town.

It is in my opinion one of the greatest triumphs of the English people that throughout these last months of terror, throughout this greatest emergency of all times, they have been able to make secure to themselves democracy in England, for no one will deny today that the English people have retained the rights and privileges of a democratic people. That has been perhaps their greatest triumph.

### First Defence

**I**T HAS been said in this House that the first line of our defence is in Britain. I do not remember just which members have said that, but I believe the minister of national defence (Mr. Ralston) said the same thing only the other day. When I am speaking of the defence of democracy I am inclined to disagree with that opinion, because wherever democracy exists it must be protected and guarded right there.

In my opinion the first line of defence of democracy in Canada

is here and is now. There is no use in our leaving the first line of defence to the people of Britain when we are thinking of our democracy; the first line of defence of Canadian democracy must be here in Canada.

Democracy in this country has been built up on the ideals of the two great peoples who constitute our nation, the French and English-speaking people. It was, I believe, the great Frenchman Voltaire to whom this remark was attributed: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

That is in essence the very cornerstone of democracy. It is the freedom of speech which is the inherent right of all peoples living in a democratic country.

Besides freedom of speech there is freedom of the press and of assembly; there is the right of every man to be thought innocent until he is proved guilty by a jury of his peers; there is also the right of labor to organize and peacefully to bargain. These various rights have always been acknowledged to be the very bulwark and foundation upon which democracy is built.

It is true that we who have watched the growth of fascism in Europe have seen these very things attacked, one after another, by the forces of reaction which have attempted to defeat, and have so successfully defeated, democracy abroad.

In Germany and Italy we have seen freedom of speech, freedom



of the press and of assembly, the right of working people to organize, all gradually taken away from the people by the powers of dictatorship. Unfortunately, when we come to consider, we find that under the Defence of Canada Regulations, which we are told are for the protection of the Canadian people against the activities of enemy aliens, certain rights and privileges of people in a democratic nation are also liable to be taken away.

We are at war, and I know it is perfectly necessary in a time of war to do certain things. No one would deny that in a time of war we have to protect lines of transportation and our coast-lines from the activities of enemy aliens.

But to anyone who has studied the Defence of Canada Regulations—and I wish very much that more of our Canadian people would study them—it becomes increasingly clear that although some of our regulations are decidedly to protect Canadian people from the activities of enemy aliens, there are in the regulations other clauses that are more calculated to defend, from the just criticism of its own people, a government which during the last session took to itself almost dictatorial powers.

#### Many Nationalities

**I**T HAS sometimes been asked, why is it that here in Canada we have not the same freedom of speech which the British people have still kept to themselves? The

reply has been that here in Canada we cannot allow the same freedom of speech because we have certain minority groups.

It is true that in this Dominion we have people of many nationalities, people who have come from various countries in Europe. They have made a contribution to Canada; they have made a contribution to our living standards, to our thought and culture; and having made that contribution, a contribution of which they may be justly proud, they should be given the full privileges of Canadian citizenship.

Today we are not allowed freedom of speech because there are certain minority groups in this country, and in my opinion that is an unjust and unfair way of dealing with these people. Many of them have come from countries in Europe where freedom never existed or where dictatorship has gradually taken over and democracy is dead.

Many of these so-called foreign-speaking peoples are more aware than Canadian-born people of the insidious approach which reaction and dictatorship will make towards the bulwarks and fundamentals of democracy. Many of these people would perhaps warn Canadians of the insidious approach towards the destruction of democracy. I wonder whether it is for that reason that we have lost some—I should say nearly all—of our freedom of speech in this country?

It is also true that in this

country a large number of arrests have been made recently under the Defence of Canada Regulations. This is creating in the minds of Canadian people a great fear as to where our own democracy is bound.

I think the majority of hon. members are conversant with the magazine called Saturday Night. In its issue of November 9, Mr. B. K. Sandwell, its editor, has an article which he heads The Growing Sense of Insecurity. Mr. Sandwell is a man whose conservative opinions and fine sense of values have won him a position of regard in this country. He says:

*"I doubt whether the government is fully aware of the grave sense of insecurity which is developing among the less influential classes of this country as a result of the workings of the Defence of Canada Regulations. . . . Canadians have been altogether too lacking in appreciation of the value of the courts and of the prerogative writs as safeguards against arbitrary action, but the present state of affairs is waking them up.*

*"Justice, it is true, is never perfect, and liberty can never be absolutely guaranteed to everybody; but the difference between the state of affairs which ordinarily exists in a British country as a result of the ability of the individual to bring his case before an impartial tribunal, and the state of affairs which exists when he is deprived of that ability, is beginning to be appreciated."*

According to Mr. Sandwell's report, about 1,500 people have been interned since the Defence of Canada Regulations came into effect. There are some things I should like to say about the way in which these regulations have been used and the way in which our people are placed in internment camps. Mr. Sandwell in his article has expressed it perhaps far better than I myself could do, so I wish to continue to quote from his article: He says:

*"The issue of an internment order which effectively deprives the internee of his liberty even though the confinement to which he is subjected may not be regarded as a punishment involves no court proceedings, no notice to the person interned, no pleadings of any kind, and no publicity. The police, armed with the order, which has been issued without the knowledge of the person against whom it is directed, simply call for him and take him away. It is often impossible for his family to find out where he is for a considerable time. His neighbors and the press are not encouraged to be inquisitive about him. It has not yet been possible to procure a writ of habeas corpus against the officials who have him in their charge."*

#### The Seamen's Union

**P**OSSIBLY other hon. members have at different times received letters regarding people who have been interned under the Defence of Canada Regulations. I do not wish to mention many of

these cases. One name which I think has received quite an amount of publicity is that of Sullivan, one of the secretaries of the seamen's union; another is a man named Chapman, another named Charles Murray, all union members and working presumably in the interests of the ordinary people.

These men have been arrested along with some 1,500 others, according to Mr. Sandwell, under the Defence of Canada Regulations.

I do not know with what these men are charged; I have no more idea than any other person reading of these things of just what the minister of justice (Mr. Lapointe) has decided these men are guilty. But the counsel who has been called in for their defence states that these men have been told that "representations have been made" that they are Communists.

That may be true; I have no idea whether it is or not. What I wish to ask at this point is, if there are 1,500 people arrested in Canada under these Defence of Canada Regulations, have they been told what their offence is? They are held in internment camps without trial.

If we are to have democracy in practice and not just as an ideal, any man or woman living under British justice should have the right to know what he or she is charged with and to have a trial by jury. If it can be proved that they are members of an illegal

organization, all right, let the jury convict them. But so far as we know, people today are being interned in Canada with no right to a hearing and trial before a court and jury.

There is one thing which I believe is left to them; they have the right to appeal to a reviewing committee. Mr. Sandwell in the same article says with regard to these reviewing committees:

*"There are only two reviewing committees in all Canada, each of them consisting of one person, an English-speaking person being one committee, and a French-speaking person being the other committee. This is not nearly enough to ensure prompt disposal of all the cases demanding review; and a person detained in error or upon insufficient grounds is entitled to prompt disposal of his claim that he is thus detained."*

And here is a point which should be impressed upon everyone:

*"And further—these committees are themselves the sole judge of the amount of information which shall be communicated to the interned person concerning the charge against him; and the amount of information which they are so communicating in some cases is so infinitesimally small as to make defence literally impossible. In one case—"*

And I believe Mr. Sandwell is referring here to the case of Pat Sullivan,

*"—no more definite particulars*

of the grounds of detention have been made obtainable, despite repeated and formal applications by counsel than that 'representations have been made that you are a member of the Communist Party.' All that the detained person can possibly do in answer to these 'particulars' is to deny that he is a member. He cannot attack the credibility of the witnesses who made the 'representations,' for he does not know who they are. He cannot offer any alternative explanation of the acts or events which led to the representations, for he does not know what they are. No court would regard this as an adequate statement of particulars for a moment; but no court has any standing in the matter."

### Negate Democracy

**IT HAS** always been considered the right of a subject under British democratic rule to be considered innocent until he is proved by trial to be guilty. I feel that in allowing the Defence of Canada Regulations to be enforced in this manner we are allowing one of the fundamentals of democracy itself to be negated.

It matters not to me what these men are or who they are, the fact remains that they are British subjects, and as such they should have the protection of the law which democracy and our British justice have always accorded to us.

In this connection I should like to quote also from a man who cannot in any sense of the word be called a defender of the Com-

munists. This is Colonel Drew, the leader of the Conservative Party in the Ontario provincial legislature. Recently Colonel Drew was speaking before the Electric Club at its luncheon in the Royal York hotel. On that occasion he spoke in defence of democracy, as I am attempting to do at this time. He also mentioned the fact that under the Defence of Canada Regulations we people are losing some of the essentials and fundamentals which, if once lost, we do not know can ever be regained. Colonel Drew says:

"If we are prepared to shed our blood to preserve democracy, we should try to make it work under stress of war."

He goes on to say:

"Nobody can accuse me of being a Communist sympathizer or enthusiastic about the C.I.O. But the test of a democracy is not whether the people we like are to be protected, but whether the principles of democracy, including public trial, are to be extended to the very limits."

Then he says this:

"All these acts are done under order-in-council, under dictates. Two weeks ago another order-in-council was passed saying that any article may be destroyed or retained by a justice of the peace at the discretion of the attorney-general, whether a person is accused or not. It is said this referred to bombs. But do we need a law to throw a bomb into a lake? It could refer to books and records and documents.

*It could take from a man, accused or not, the means by which he could defend himself. This is shocking. It offends every principle of British jurisprudence, and it is time we expressed ourselves about regulations of this kind. It is an 800-year-old issue, and the question of the right to discuss it is even older."*

Also during these last few months we have found that under the Defence of Canada Regulations certain people have been arrested merely because they had in their possession literature of a certain kind. Yet freedom of the press is another fundamental of democracy. I know many of us have deplored the burning of books in Germany, and we have said that the German people are going back into the dark ages, when they are no longer allowed freedom to read for themselves and form their own opinions.

It is true that we in Canada have not yet reached the stage where we burn books. But we have already come to the point where under the Defence of Canada Regulations people have been arrested because they have had in their possession certain literature. Recently in British Columbia a bookstore keeper was arrested under the Defence of Canada Regulations for having books in his bookstore.

I cannot help feeling that any intelligent person in Canada must realize that to form an opinion a person must have access to these various ideologies; he must have

access to various schools of thought, because it is only by comparison and by contrast that an intelligent person can come to any decision as to what he himself believes.

Yet today in Canada, under the Defence of Canada Regulations, we are having this certain right severely narrowed and limited. This is one other matter which I feel offers a distinct menace to democracy in Canada.

### Police Seek Leaflet

WHILE I am speaking about literature, I should like to mention something else which is perhaps more of a personal nature, but which I feel is something with which every hon. member should be vitally concerned. During the recess reports were brought to me, in my constituency, that the provincial police were going round the country looking for a certain little leaflet I had had printed.

It would have been an easy thing for the police, who know me fairly well—I believe I am known to most people in that part of Canada—to come to me and ask for one of those leaflets. I would have given it to them with the greatest pleasure, because it was nothing but an open letter to the Canadian people giving in condensed form what I had said in the debate on the budget. Instead, however, of asking me for a copy, the police travelled miles and miles through the north country, visiting house after house asking for leaflets, and stirring up

in the minds of the people fear and apprehension as to what the leaflets contained, and the danger they presented.

This is just one example of how the police are operating today under the Defence of Canada Regulations. It is an example of the way in which they are causing fear among our people.

I took great exception to that procedure. On the other hand I saw no reason for undue alarm because, as I have said, the leaflet contained only a condensed version of the speech I had made in the session. I took no action in the matter whatever. It is quite likely that numbers of people, in deference to the wishes of the police, turned in their copies.

I remember that on the first occasion of my speaking in the House I said I would devote my energies and my time, and speak in the interests and on behalf of the life of the Canadian people. I have consistently spoken and written both in and out of this House in the interests of the underprivileged, the inarticulate and the non-influential among our people, and I shall continue to do so.

I find that there are others who have said some of the things I have said. I notice that those in charge of the Toronto community chest campaign have published a little leaflet headed with the word "fight." In it they say the same things I have said repeatedly, namely, that we must fight poverty and that we must fight against subversive influences in Canada;

that we must fight malnutrition, intolerance, delinquency, distress, despair, unrest, and so on.

I note that the governor-general of Canada has said, in connection with the community chest's drive, that at this time when our thoughts are on the battlegrounds of Britain we must not forget the righteous claims of our fellow citizens in Canada.

In essence that is what I have always maintained. That is what I have always said to the people in Canada. I find that a little pamphlet like that published by the campaign headquarters is allowed free circulation in Canada. No policeman seeks to blot it out. Why? Because we find that this pamphlet asks for charity. I have never asked for charity for the people of Canada, because I say that is not the solution of their problems.

I have in my hand a pamphlet printed by a newspaper (The Canadian Tribune) and headed Democracy Must Live! It contains a number of the speeches I made in the House of Commons, and also the open letter to the people of Canada, which is nothing but a condensed version of the speech I made in the budget debate. In that speech I did not ask for charity. I said:

*"We must demand that no person or corporation or institution make any profit from this war. We must demand that those with great wealth pay the cost of the war and not we who now can only just manage to live."*



There is the difference between this pamphlet and the other one. Yet I am informed that the police have been to the offices of the newspaper company which published this pamphlet. I am informed that they have taken the galley-proof and the available copies, and that men in various cities of Canada who have been selling this little pamphlet have been arrested.

An hon. MEMBER: Shame.

Mrs. NIELSEN; I do not speak as an individual. I speak, as do other hon. members, as an elected representative of the people. If democracy is going to live in Canada, then the other members of the House of Commons have the right with me to ask why the voice of one member of the House should be stilled.

It becomes increasingly evident that under the Defence of Canada Regulations anyone may be accused of being subversive if he speaks or acts against the powers that be in this country. If he says anything against the power of finance or against the power of big business, he may be called subversive under the Defence of Canada Regulations.

In Germany, if it were found necessary to discredit anyone or attempt to make everyone take notice, the cry of "Jew, Jew," was raised. In Canada, if certain people feel that they want to discredit anyone, they do not raise the cry of "Jew," they raise the cry of "red, red." Jew-baiting in Germany, red-baiting in Canada! These are the things I want to

bring to the attention of this House. If we have democracy in this country, these conditions must no longer exist.

As I said before, although Canada is the land of my adoption, England is the land of my birth. I have no fear of these things. It matters not to me what I am called. If I am called "red," that does not affect me. Only one thing which would perhaps break my heart is if in this effort to preserve democracy the common people of this country ever had occasion to label me "yellow."

Some of the trade-union leaders have also been labeled "red." I do not know whether they are, but if we have any democracy at all we should safeguard the citizens of this country from things of this kind. They should be given a chance in our courts to be proved guilty or to be exonerated from these charges. I was not in the House at the time it was delivered, but I read a speech which the prime minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) made on September 8, 1939. He made some wonderful statements, and I should like to quote him as follows:

*"I care not who the individual may be, how respectable in his own eyes or in the eyes of others he may appear, or what position he may hold; if he seeks to profiteer in this crisis he belongs to the underworld and should be treated as one of those who menace all that is sacred in human relations."*

If a man seeks to profit in this crisis, he belongs to the under-

world, according to the prime minister. There are many people who have been interned because they have worked in the interests of the common people of Canada. Yet we have today as members of an advisory committee to this government a number of leading industrialists, men who are bound up with the great financial institutions, industries and big-business monopolies. They are members of a committee advising the government on its war effort.

Through the corporations which they represent these men are making unprecedented profits out of war contracts. Remembering the words of the prime minister, I believe it is also well to remember that this government has as members of an advisory committee men who, according to the words of the prime minister, belong to the underworld.

There are no provisions in the Defence of Canada Regulations to take care of such subversive activities. We should not forget the fate of France. There were those who were guilty of the downfall of that country, those who stole her democracy and relinquished it to the dictators, those who imprisoned thousands of French citizens in internment camps and prisons, those who set loose the really guilty ones. I think there is considerable need for the Canadian people to see a parallel of these conditions within our own boundaries.

### "The Front Line"

MANY tributes have been paid in this House to the armed forces, and I have joined in those tributes. But I want to pay a tribute to another army, that army of men and women who are without uniforms, who are without ammunition, who have nothing but the courage of their convictions. They have only the ideals of democracy to which they cling, but they are standing in the front line of the defence of democracy here in Canada.

These people are to be found in various walks of life; they hold various political opinions, and have various creeds. I hope I may be privileged to stand beside those who are standing in the front line in the defence of democracy. These people have done much to help to keep alive the structure and spirit of democracy, as well as the practice of democracy, which matters more than anything else. In closing I should like to quote a few words from the *Globe and Mail* of October 12, because I believe that in these words is a truth which every Canadian should realize. They are:

*"It is the unpopular people who are the first victims of any Gestapo. The turn of the more reputable citizens comes next, when, after having acquiesced in injustices being done to people they dislike, they find that their own shield against injustice has been destroyed."*

I know there are many today who feel that those in internment

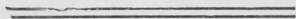
camps are just Communists or agitators. They may be, but as Canadian citizens they have the right to a trial and British justice. If we as Canadians are willing to let them suffer without having justice, who knows how many of us will suffer in the same way in the future?

It is not only that we have to stand today in defence of what democracy remains to us; the Canadian people must gather their forces, and all those who believe in and are willing to defend democracy must attack the powers

of reaction which are stealing the very bulwarks of our democracy from us.

They must go after the democracy which has been taken away from us. There must be freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and the right to a just trial. Through these years there have been people who have been willing to defend and fight for democracy. If they are willing to give their lives for democracy, then I feel convinced that democracy will never die in Canada.

Nov. 20, 1940



# Pleader for Humanity

From the Toronto Daily Star

Nov. 22, 1940

**M**RS. DORISE NIELSEN, the new member of parliament, in the first session in the House of Commons delivered a number of addresses which are models of their kind. They are couched in simple, dignified, restrained English, delightful to hear and read and elevating to the mind and spirit. They are worthy to be studied as lessons in English structure and are valuable as documents on Canadian sociology. They reflect sincerity of mind and warmth of heart which give them a timeless quality.

The addresses deal with practical matters. Mrs. Nielsen tells about the conditions of the western farmers; about unemployment relief as she and her family have experienced it, and its effects especially upon youth and upon the morale of families and communities. She describes the extent of poverty in this country and its relation to sickness, inefficiency, the loss of human talent and the growth of social problems. She portrays the conditions of the public schools, pupils and teachers in her part of the country, the state of health of the people, and suggests measures for

their improvement. Each speech contains facts which Mrs. Nielsen (who was formerly a teacher) obtained both from authoritative sources and through her own experience as the wife of a western farmer, the mother of several children and a leader in her community.

There are some individuals, and Mrs. Nielsen is one, who can go straight to the heart of an issue. In her observations on all matters before the House, Mrs. Nielsen introduced the thought that humanity is above, or at least as important as, material and political considerations. In her maiden speech she reminded her colleagues that also in wartime parliament must maintain and develop its services for the people at home. She described the life in her constituency, and the hunger among many of the people, not for food alone, but also for music, books and the finer things of life. Summing up, she said:

*"The domestic crisis is one that looms as important in their minds as the war crisis. As a nation we are only as great and as fine as the most humble of our people. When some of our people are living under such conditions as I have mentioned, then we definitely are not*

a great nation. We have been told that the Defence of Canada Regulations are to be enforced to defend the Canadian people from subversive elements. Actually the most subversive thing in Canada is poverty. I shall never forget that. It has been at work among the people for many years . . ."

Perhaps the most unforgettable passages in Mrs. Nielsen's addresses are those expressing her concept of democracy. Last June, in her speech on the Mobilization Act, she reminded her colleagues:

"My friends, democracy is a living thing. If you seek to bind and chain democracy, if you seek

to keep it for a while without letting it live, and without permitting it to exercise itself, democracy will wither; it will die. I would fear the enemy in this country, yet I also fear one thing just as much, and that is the loss of democracy within the borders of our country. I fear this. We have lost political liberty through the Defence of Canada Regulations . . ."

These addresses have been collected and printed in pamphlet form under the title, Democracy Must Live! . . . Individuals who are studying current economic history, and especially Canadian social and financial problems, will find in this publication valuable and also original data.

# Woman Fights for Freedom

From the Toronto Globe and Mail

Nov. 20, 1940

**M**RS. DORISE NIELSEN, the Unity member for North Battleford, performed a valuable public service through the speech which she delivered in the House of Commons Tuesday. It is somewhat of a reflection upon the masculine members of that assembly that such a timely protest should have been left to be made by the solitary woman member of the Commons.

It was a courageous, clear-cut and almost unanswerable exposition, couched in very moderate language, of the rights of freedom for the individual in thought, speech and writing, which is in the ultimate the fundamental buttress of our system of democracy. It was also a very effective expose of the wrong-headed obscurantism of the police authorities and of the methods employed by them in their administration of the Defence of Canada Regulations.

Mrs. Nielsen is an elected representative of the people of Canada, and as such she must represent the views and outlook of a certain section, perhaps a very small minority, of our population. By her account she had printed and published a leaflet which, in the form of

an open letter to the Canadian people, gave in condensed form the gist of the observations which she made in her speech in the budget debate last session. Apparently it was in the main a protest against what she regarded as unjust economic conditions, and there is no suggestion that it advocated any subversive measures which might interfere with the efficiency of the national war effort.

However, she alleges that the police in Saskatchewan, when they became cognizant of the existence of the leaflet, instead of requesting a copy of it from the authoress, which she would not have withheld, ranged through the country asking for copies of the leaflet and, in the words of Mrs. Nielsen, "stirring up in the minds of the people fear and apprehension as to what the leaflets contained and the danger they presented."

Now it seems to us that in these times our police force should have its hands full with such proper duties as keeping watch over potentially dangerous aliens and should have no leisure for engaging in such highly improper activities as acting as counter-propagandists against an elected member of parliament. But policemen do not act



without instructions from high authorities, and the real responsibility for their indefensible conduct must rest with the attorney-general of Saskatchewan or the minister of justice at Ottawa.

The cold truth is that the Defence of Canada Regulations confer much too arbitrary powers upon the authorities, and evidence accumulates that they are employing them to make a mockery of the fundamental democratic rights for whose preservation brave young men are dying every day and the nations of the British commonwealth are pouring out their wealth.

In the midst of a war it is the primary task of our parliament to ensure that the government is vig-

orous, efficient and honest and to turn the searchlight of inquiry and criticism upon its administration of the war program, but it has a secondary duty, namely, to keep vigilant guard over the liberties of the nation, which are its most precious heritage. In this field the British parliament has shown a magnificent example because it has sternly resisted every effort to curb the right of free speech and fair criticism and every attempt on the part of the cabinet to secure carte blanche for itself in matters affecting civilian rights.

The Canadian parliament should be no less vigilant in this regard, and Mrs. Nielsen deserves commendation and encouragement for the example which she has set.

¶ "The great body of democratic thought in this country must rise and, with confidence, assert itself, to banish and defeat the enemies of the people . . ."

# Where Do YOU Stand?

Appeal to Readers of The Canadian Tribune

**T**WO OF the most-to-be-desired attributes any person can possess are, I believe, common sense and a sense of values.

Today, in this propaganda-ridden world, it is growing increasingly difficult to maintain mental equilibrium. Over the air and in the press, like the man on the trapeze, "ideas" fly around with the greatest of ease, but the average man and woman finds them difficult to follow. To have a guide in such times which will enable us to maintain a sense of proportion and hold before us a sane sense of direction is of estimable value.

You know as well as I that these last months have brought startling changes to Canadian life. We have witnessed our democratic forces and traditions receive blows which have for the time being laid them low. The impact and force of the blows have temporarily stunned us and the very real presence of reaction standing over us, armed with enormous powers, constitutes no mean menace.

Now is the time to show of what stuff we are made. Are we to cringe and cower? Are we to grovel and whine, yet lie inert

and take the count? Not I. As I write, I know your reply will be the same as mine. Together, we will say NO.

**T**HE GREAT body of democratic thought in this country must rise and, with confidence, assert itself, to banish and defeat the enemies of the people. Then it is for you and me to help in every way to arouse this great body of public opinion by every means possible and with great speed. One of our best aids in this wonderful work is the Tribune.

Unlike the so-called "big" press, however, the Tribune has no financial safety net upon which it can rely, unless you provide one. Right now you should do something toward getting that safety net under one of the most competent performers in the newspaper ring.

I have introduced the Tribune to hundreds of people in Saskatchewan this summer. Can you do something towards helping to increase its circulation? I'm sure you can. Please do—and do it NOW!

DORISE W. NIELSEN  
Ottawa, Ont.

## Subscription Blank:

TO THE CANADIAN TRIBUNE,  
ROOM 304, 95 KING STREET EAST,  
TORONTO, ONTARIO.

Enclosed is \$. . . . . for which please renew my subscription  
to the Canadian Tribune for. . . . .

NAME . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . .

CITY or TOWN . . . . . PROVINCE . . . . .

1 Year—\$2.00 - Six Months—\$1.00

## Subscription Blank:

TO THE CANADIAN TRIBUNE,  
ROOM 304, 95 KING STREET EAST,  
TORONTO, ONTARIO.

Enclosed is \$. . . . . for which please renew my subscription  
to the Canadian Tribune for. . . . .

NAME . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . .

CITY or TOWN . . . . . PROVINCE . . . . .

1 Year—\$2.00 - Six Months—\$1.00



# A Journalist's Opinion

I AM an old-fashioned liberal, and hold the belief that the fight for democracy at home is as important as the fight for democracy at the front. I believe that our first duty is to win the struggle against Nazi aggression; but that if we put our ideals into cold storage and abandon the movement for social justice, we shall weaken, not strengthen, ourselves in our efforts for national victory.

I support the Tribune because it is independent and critical, and because the world has more need of these qualities today than many people realize. All our troubles — the rise of Nazism, the palsy of democracy — are due to "yes-men," who obey their masters slavishly, evade awkward issues, and acquiesce in things they know to be false.

The Tribune is one of the few sincere and fearless papers I know in this country; and that is why—though I often disagree profoundly with its views—I commend it to all readers who prefer to think for themselves, rather than rest content with doctored information and ready made opinions.

The way to help the Tribune is to buy it, to introduce it to friends, and to support the Sustaining Fund.



*R. S. Lambert*

R. S. LAMBERT\*

---

\* Mr. Lambert is a well-known English author and journalist. He was for many years editor of the Listener, official organ of the British Broadcasting Corporation. During the past year he has been heard regularly over the CBC.



✓✓ Double Check  
the news



WITH

**THE CANADIAN  
TRIBUNE**